

Dream a Little Dream of Me – Forward

Anyone who knows me or about me knows that I'm a gun nut and favor certain firearms. With the passage of time, my preferences have changed. The M14 rifle was the last Main Battle Rifle the US fielded. It was phased out in the late 1960s and replaced with the M16. That's where the problems started.

The M16 uses a direct gas impingement system rather than a gas piston system like the M1 Garand and the M14. Perhaps that explains why the M14 rifle is still used by our snipers and Special Forces.

There are 2 models of the civilian M14 that merit attention, the M1A Loaded model and the M1A Super Match model. The Loaded has many National Match features and a MSRP of barely \$150 more than the standard model. The Super Match is the basis for the M21 and the M25. It has an extra heavy duty barrel with a 1:10 twist; and, with a different stock is called the M21.

The 5.56×45mm cartridge isn't bad in and of itself. The limiting factor is the barrel length and the ideal barrel length is 20" because that permits the velocity necessary to make the cartridge truly outstanding, given the small caliber. Ruger has a Mini-14 and, recently, the SR-556, both with short stroke gas pistons, but the barrels are too short. They just brought the SR-762 and, except for the 16" barrel, it's okay.

Heckler & Koch really leads the pack with their HK416 and HK417. Both are 'available' with 20" barrels and use 2 position short stroke gas pistons. The ultimate M16 is the HK416 with the Extended lower which has S-1-3-F positions on the fire selector. Ruger's AC-556 selector had 1-3-F positions and relied on the Garand safety.

While the HK417 with a 20" barrel is their sniper variant, it has 1:11 twist and would perform better with 168gr ammo. The M21 with its 1:10 twist is better suited for the 175gr BTHP ammo. Which brings up brands of ammo; the consensus in the sniper community is that Black Hills is the best, albeit twice the price of the *cheap* stuff. Due to a brass shortage, cartridge cases are now made of GOLD (based on the retail price).

John Moses Browning designed the premier handgun of all time, the M1911. It is still preferred by Special Forces. It chambers the .45ACP cartridge and Speer ammo puts out a more than adequate product, 230gr Gold Dot. The Taurus PT1911 clone gives the purchaser the most quality for the dollar.

The standard military shotgun for over a century has been the 12 gauge, primarily pump actions. I prefer the Mossberg 590A1 Special Purpose shotgun tailored for the USMC. I also favor Remington 3" buckshot with the 15-pellet Express Magnum load and the Brenneke Black Magic 3" 1³/₈oz slug, a sure kill to 100 meters.

Dream a Little Dream of Me – Prolog

Angered by the Administration's efforts to ban firearms in the aftermath of the Newtown murders, the man vowed to rebuild the gun collection he had disposed of 18 months before. He'd do it differently this time and would buy his 'wish list' instead of settling for 2nd best. Second best had been within his price range the first pass and was still very expensive.

He'd replaced the Loaded M1A with a Super Match M1A. He'd contacted Springfield Armory and asked if they would ship an SA9802 action to McMillan in Phoenix where they would glass bed the action in one of their adjustable M3A tactical stocks. After the explanation from McMillan, he selected the standard clamp-bar elevator option.

McMillan agreed to install a Harris bipod, a Sadlak improved Brookfield scope mount and a Nightforce NXS 3.5-15x50mm Tactical Illuminated Reticle Rifle Scope-Mil-Dot using A.R.M.S. throw lever rings at a slightly reduced price. He agreed since the price was the best he'd found. McMillan also agreed to mount the muzzle brake he'd send them since the ultimate destination of the rifle was California. They even came up with a mount for a night vision sight. The muzzle brake was the Surefire muzzle brake adapter they'd developed to mount their legacy FA762K end mount suppressors. His Strawman sold him a complete package for \$2,400. He also sold him 25 of the CMI 25-round magazines for \$40 each and offered him 10 X-Products 50 round drum magazines, at MSRP. He'd created an M21 in the process, complete with a Springfield Armory leather sling.

With all the magazines loaded to capacity, he had 1,125 rounds ready to go. The weight came in at ~100 pounds, not exactly what you'd call a combat load. While he was waiting on the M21, he bought a Mossberg 590A1 SPX, which included the OKC3S bayonet. When it arrived he had his dealer install a sidesaddle. He installed his own 15 round aftermarket sling and butt cuff. He didn't care for the speedfeed stock.

He bought everything his Strawman offered since the prices were, 'within reason' and it was the only way he'd get most of what he wanted. He contacted Black Hills Ammunition and explained to whoever answered the phone what he wanted; 6,000 rounds of their 175gr MatchKing BTHP in 7.62x51mm and 12,000 rounds of 62 gr Sierra MatchKing BTHP in 5.56x45mm. The person on the other end of the phone asked if he had any idea of the size of that purchase. He told them yes, in the vicinity of \$36,000 and told them to ship the ammo to his dealer giving them the address and phone number. He expected a lower price close to wholesale and said this was but the first of several purchases.

His dealer charged \$50 per firearm where he was the recipient on behalf of a purchaser. Scrupulously honest, he wouldn't even discuss California illegal firearms, let alone process the transactions. The AN/PVS-22 or Universal Night Sight (UNS) was a medium range night sight. It was rated at Starlight: Optimum Contrast 1050 m and ¼ Moonlight: Optimum Contrast 1340 m. Perfect night vision for a 7.62x51mm rifle. Our man bought

that directly from Optics Planet for his M21 since the purchase wasn't restricted, just expensive. The strawman delivered his weapon.

For the 5.56x45mm rifles he wanted a pair of HK416s. He had to use the Strawman, again. The Strawman also acquired a pair of Extended lowers with 4 positions rather than 3. They were the models with S-1-3-F. The HK417s came as complete rifles while the HK416 had the lower replaced with the Extended lower. He now had two pair of select fire weapons that relied on gas pistons rather than the weak point of the M16, the direct gas impingement system.

He hadn't purchased handguns yet and had the Strawman get 4 Taurus PT1911Bs. The Strawman acquired extended, threaded, fitted barrels and suppressors. This time, Speer got the ammo order and it was 10,000 rounds of 230gr .45ACP Gold Dot.

The wife complained about not having a shotgun or a backup handgun. She wanted the same as her father had, a Browning Auto 5. Browning still produced the Auto 5, but it wasn't available with other than a hunting barrel. She ended up with a Mossberg 590A1 SPX and he upped his supply of 3" slugs and buckshot from 500 rounds of each shell to 2,000 rounds of each shell. He also acquired 1,000-rounds each of Remington reduced recoil 8-pellet 00 and 1,000-rounds of reduced recoil Remington Sluggers. The backup handgun was moderately easy, 2 Walther PPKs in .380 from the Strawman because he wanted extended threaded barrels and suppressors. He made a single purchase of 3,000 rounds of .380 90gr Gold Dot. And no, his name wasn't Bond.

The HK416 would support a suppressor and had a different gas piston position if a suppressor was used. That's why our guy bought the foreign suppressors; they were H&K approved. His Strawman lived in Phoenix and had started McMillan on the construction of a Tac-50A1R2 with all the accessories except the jeweled trigger with bottom safety.

Ammo was hard to find due to Newtown and the sudden demand for ammo, magazines and firearms. He advised his Strawman that the Tac-50 should come with 9 extra magazines over the 2 included and that he needed 4,000 rounds of Hornady 750gr A-MAX match and 20 cans of Mk211MP Raufoss, if he could get it. When asked if he wanted anything else, he replied, *M72 LAWs, M67 grenades, Mk3A2s, M83 white smoke and M18 yellow, red, green and violet smoke, M14 TH3 incendiary and M84 Flash Bangs.*

How many did he want? He told the man 6 crates of M72, 10 crates of M67, 5 crates of Mk3A2 and the same quantity of M14 TH3 and the M84s. Smoke, anywhere between 120 and 180 rounds of each color. That reminded him that he needed 40mm grenades; M433, M583A1, and some M781 practice. He also wanted 4 H&K AG-C/GLM under barrel launchers for the HK416s and HK417s. They settled on at least 6 canisters of M433, 2 canisters of M781 and 6 canisters of the M583A1, if the guy could get it. The Tac-50 was ready and was complete with the accessories including the MUNS.

"I ordered some ammunition and my Tac-50 is ready for delivery. We have that capital gain to cover it."

"I used the capital gain to cover what I ordered from American Safe Rooms and the backyard shelter I'm having put in."

"I spent fifty."

"I spent thirty. That leaves us with twenty. What should we buy?"

"LTS food. Rainy Day Foods and Emergency Essentials. Fill in from Nitro-Pak if necessary. I got extended threaded barrels for all the handguns so we could use suppressors."

"Did you get the regular barrels too?"

"Of course."

"Did you get a 4 of Phoenix style AWC suppressed .22s?"

"Oops."

Dream a Little Dream of Me – Chapter 1

“Wait a minute, what about taxes?”

“Well, once we’re done with this round of spending, we can use all the unspent money to file tax estimates.”

“I think I’d better file an estimate now for ¼ of the gain. Twenty percent of 25 grand is 5 grand so we can still buy food.”

“You can start by double buying. We’ll eat what you buy and you’ll buy what we eat. I don’t like pork steak or tri-tip. If you do buy tri-tip, grind it into ground beef and mix it with hamburger. You should get 15% lean that way.”

Long story short, he got his money’s worth for about 45 grand. He was looking for places to hide some of what he had. He had an internal debate whether the Tac-50 or the Enhanced HK416s was the worse choice. The HK417s were select fire. With the amount of .50BMG ammo he had, they’d bury him under San Quentin. Fortunately the shelter went in fast and she had a ramp entrance. The blast hatch was the emergency escape opening.

He went back and reviewed the Quiet Diesel 12.5. It was rated at 120/240 and 104.2/52.1 amps. Jerry Young had straightened him out on amperage. A house with a 100 amp service had 100 amps at 240 volts, not 120 volts. The Kohler 30REOZJB put out 113 amps at 240 and burned anywhere from 1gph at 25% load to 2.6gph at 100% load. That was the Non-Emissions Certified model, not available in California. The Kohler was pricey and had a bad rep when it came to service, which it seldom needed.

Jerry had mentioned an Isuzu 21kw generator. When he searched and found it, he knew he had the right place because the price was still \$7,499. That didn’t include any extras, like a 200 amp transfer switch (ATS), etc. He also found a 30kw generator for \$8,799. (www.centralmainediesel.com/order/2000TS.asp?page=2000TS)

This unit operates at 1800 RPM and comes with a muffler and 4 point vibration mounts for quieter operation. This unit features a 2.4L John Deere 4024TF diesel engine, electronic governor (0.5% frequency control), electronic engine controls (including snapshot diagnostic data), cast iron crankcase with reborable liners, full flow lube oil filtration, brushless generator end (fan-cooled), solid state automatic voltage regulator w/ stability adjustment and underspeed protection, turbocharged aspiration, electronic fuel controller, extended 500-hour oil change and filter interval, single-side service points, liquid cooling, residential-grade muffler, replaceable foam air filter element, heavy steel skid base and control panel w/ hour meter. Battery Not Included. CALL FOR SHIPPING QUOTE.

Reading closer, it didn't include sound attenuated enclosure (\$1,700) or the 200 amp ATS (\$1,295). However, it did have a maximum continuous output of 250 amps. Furthermore:

Consumption at 1/2 load	1.3 gal/hr
Consumption at 3/4 load	1.8 gal/hr
Consumption at full load	2.4 gal/hr

And,

Replace Oil Filter	500 hours / 12 months
Replace Fuel Filter	500 hours / 12 months
Replace Air Filter	500 Hours / 12 months
Replace Engine Coolant	500 Hours / 12 months
Exercise Generator Under Load	Twice each month
Change Oil	500 hours / 12 months
Clean Fuel Injector	250 Hours / 6 Months
Adjust Valve Clearance	250 Hours / 6 Months

Power Single-Phase	
Automatic Voltage Regulation	Standard
Is this unit suitable for powering sensitive electronic equipment like a laptop computer?	Yes – 1% regulation from no load to full load.
Maximum Output	32,000 watts
Continuous Output	30,000 watts
Load Amperage at 120 volts	
Maximum Load	267 Amps
Continuous Load	250 Amps
Load Amperage at 240 volts	
Maximum Load	133 Amps
Continuous Load	125 Amps
Sound Level @ 23 ft(7 m)	74 dB(A)

Type	John Deere 4024TF
Cylinders	4
Operating RPM	1800 RPM
Horsepower	48 HP
Cylinder Block	Cast Iron Block w/ Cast Iron Sleeve
Bore & Stroke	3.4" x 4.1"
Displacement	2.4 Liters
Aspiration	Turbocharged

Air Cleaner	Heavy Duty Replaceable Dry Element
Oil Capacity (w/ Oil Filter)	6.7 quarts
Recommended Engine Oil	SAE 15W-40
Exhaust Outlet	2" OD Muffler Outlet
Governor	Electronic Governor
Frequency Control	+/- 0.5%
Coolant Capacity	Approx. 6.5 quarts
Cooling Fan	Pusher Type
Battery Charging Alternator	Standard - 90 Amps
Cold Weather Starting Aid	Glow Plugs
Fuel	Diesel
Starting System	Electric

Fuel Inlet Hose Size	3/8"
Fuel Return Hose Size	5/16"
Minimum Power Lead Size	1/0 AWG
No. Power Lead Conductors	4
Exhaust Outlet	2" OD Muffler Outlet
Coolant Recommendation	Mixture: 1/2 Anti-Freeze & 1/2 Water
Radiator (L x D x H)	Dimensions 22-3/4" x 9-1/2" x 24"
Fuel Inlet & Return (Facing Radiator)	Location Left-Side
Exhaust (Facing Radiator)	Direction Left-Side
Power Output Location (Facing Radiator)	Back-Side
Service (Facing Radiator)	Points Oil Fill: Left-Side Oil Drain: Left-Side Air Filter: Left-Side Oil Filter: Left-Side Fuel Filter: Left-Side
Battery Type	12 VDC - 575 CCA
Engine Oil Type	SAE 15W-40

Length	63"
Width	24"
Height	45"
Dry weight	1,350 lbs

It had to come from Maine to California so the freight would be a killer. It weighed about 1,500 pounds, including the shipping platform, but not the sound enclosure or ATS. They left the roof off the generator room until it arrived. When it did, they had to hire a guy to lower it into the generator room, after he'd removed the sound attenuated enclosure. He charged by the hour, but had his own tools. Once the generator was placed, he lowered the sound attenuated enclosure and bolted it back in place. Five hours at

\$75 an hour, including the equipment that he only used for a few minutes. He didn't hook it up, telling them to hire an electrician.

"Three hundred and seventy-five dollars; and, I didn't even get kissed!"

The bargain 30kw generator came in at \$8,799+\$1,700+\$1,295+\$375 plus shipping. They'd bill the shipping, but the total, so far, was \$12,169. They'd purchased a used 14,000 gallon service station tank that didn't leak (it was replaced because it was too small). The top of the tank was 48" below soil level and topped with a 6" slab of concrete. Not that it would matter, but the tank had a radiation protection factor of 2 to the 15.8333 power or 58,386. On paper, the tank didn't hold enough diesel fuel to run 24/7 for 56 weeks.

The shelter, with a triple layer of 1" steel road plate supporting 120" of compacted soil, had a protection factor of 10,822,636,909.12 not counting the steel. The 3" of steel had close to a one-tenthing thickness, ergo, it equaled ~14½" of soil. A tenthing thickness of steel was 3.3". The ramp access was another steel plate, on rollers, that slid to join the ramp and could be locked in place with a padlock on the back end.

When she had her heart attack back in January 2013, they used a drug-eluting stent (DES). The outpatient surgery took 65 minutes and the surgeon charged \$1,000 per minute, \$65,000. Kaiser only picked up 80% of the bill...

"What's this?"

"A Safe Cell."

"But, there's a Safe Cell in the shelter!"

"The generator has to breathe too and you wouldn't want it to become radioactive or you couldn't service it. That's why it has its own closet, the same as the Safe Cell in the shelter.

"You know how I always recommended Techron 15w-40 motor oil?"

"What about it?"

"Care to guess what they recommend for this engine?"

"Castrol synthetic 15w-40?"

"Yep."

The generator was installed with the radiator facing west, putting all the access points on the side facing the door from the shelter. He had to install an air conditioner to cool the generator room. There was enough room in the room for 6 55 gallon drums of oil, 5

full and 1 empty. There were shelves holding extra injectors, glow plugs and each type of filter, 50,000 hours' worth (100 of each). The generator room was insulated for sound using glued on sound absorbing tile. After the first test run, they also insulated the inside of the hallway and the tunnel side of the doors.

By this time, she'd done all of the double buying and ordered the basic grains from Rainy Day foods. She still bought tri-tips but also bought some fatty cuts of beef (round steaks/swiss steals) for the fat to convert the pure ground meat to ground sirloin. They did that by weight. At least he finally knew how to operate the meat grinder and got the duty of creating the ground sirloin. Following Jerry's advice they got a Diamant 525 from Lehman's with spare parts.

Since the Diamant had a 16" pulley, he decided to try a Motorization kit for the Country Living grain mill. It mostly worked but worked much better when he changed the pulley on the motor. The Country Living Mill pulley was 12¼" OD. It followed that the Diamant wasn't running fast enough. He calculated the pulley ratios for the CLM and added a larger pulley on the motor to get the Diamant running slightly faster.

The shelter was 44' long by 24' wide by 10' high, 1,056ft² and 10,560ft³. The generator room was on the east end and extended to the south side near where the diesel tank ended. The fuel line and return had been routed before everything was covered over. The house to their immediate west had been sitting empty for over a year so the septic tank went on their side of the block wall with the leach lines.

The black water tank below the shelter floor pumped the sewage to the septic tank. The 5,600 gallon water tank below the shelter floor was hooked to city water with an automatic cutoff switch. A 3,300 gallon propane tank was purchased and buried. At 3,300 gallons net and only a hot water heater and propane stove, they should have enough for several years.

They held off spending anymore until the 2013 tax return was filed. They expected to owe but, in fact, got a refund. Their gun collection was mounted in open racks mounted on one shelter wall, each weapon locked with a cable lock through the action and the support. Furniture wise, they had 2 8' folding tables from Staples and 20 padded folding chairs, a bedroom with a new commercial king sized box spring and mattress and their old bedroom furniture. They only set up one table and 10 chairs. She had a recliner and he had a nice chair at his computer/radio table. New radiation testing equipment was stored in a metal cabinet. His DVD/Blu-Ray player and Vizio TV went into the shelter. Given ample warning, they could move her larger Vizio TV and DVD/Blu-Ray to the shelter and the contents of the freezer. However...

He bought a Sears 25ft³ chest freezer and had it delivered, to the back patio. Getting it into the shelter was a challenge. While they were at it, they moved the 21ft³ upright freezer to the shelter too. Over the next several weeks they added commercial pork cuts in 2 portion packages, Cure 81 hams, Hormel thick sliced bacon and Jimmy Dean sausage. They bought a whole Black Angus beef and extra boneless to get ground sirloin.

Next, they added plenty of comfort foods to the shelter, Hormel beef tamales, assorted burritos, muffin mixes, brownie mix, cookie mixes and Devil's food cake mixes. All 360 48oz cans of Folgers was Classic Roast. They also added Coke Classic and Coke Zero; the Classic would last forever but the Coke Zero had a definite shelf life. The garage refrigerator (only) went into the shelter next.

The medical cabinet was another metal cabinet and contained everything but their insulin; they both used the same, Humulin-N, but different syringes. Since she used a lot, they kept a good inventory on hand, always using the bottles with the shortest expiration dates. They added a few incidentals: an automated external defibrillator (AED, both took the class), a 10 liter oxygen concentrator plus 12 bottles of oxygen with regulators, nasal cannulas and masks, extra blood sugar testing equipment, a spare blood pressure cuff, his 2,000 extra tabs of Norco 325/10 and 1,800 extra tabs of Xanax 0.5mg.

Do you know how to get supplies like that? First, you get them prescribed for QID or TID and then, you take less than the prescribed amount. The easiest to accumulate was the Norco (Vicodin with less Tylenol) at ~1,100 per year, but he could only accumulate about 360 per year of the Xanax. The other medicines... figure you're stuck with a 100 day supply. Try to refill your prescriptions as early as they'll allow, it helps. You might pick up a 12-15 day supply over the course of a year. Or, you can get prescriptions from a different doctor for the same drugs and pay retail (get generics if possible). As Kaiser patients, everything was generic.

Eventually, they had all the fuel tanks filled and 5 drums of stabilized 87 octane gas with 4 left to fill. The food shelves were pretty full, enough LTS foods for 9 people for a year. They only intended to allow one neighbor and his family into the shelter. However, his wife started adding STS to the shelter by double buying and they ended up with 18 months' worth for 9 people. She and the wife often shopped together and he'd end up hauling a bunch to the shelter.

He'd also gotten his driver's license back, after passing the written test on the 3rd try and the driving test on the 2nd try. It really raised their insurance rates for the following 3 years. He only drove to go out into the desert to practice with his firearms, one day a month, and picked up smokes and a bottle of Jack Black on the trip back. He hadn't resumed drinking; the alcohol was for medical emergencies. (They could handle a pretty big emergency.) If he resumed drinking, it was even money on what would last the longest, him or the Jack Black. His money was on the Jack Black.

When he had 2 cases of Jack Black on the shelf, he decided to expand. He added: Bombay Sapphire gin, Absolute vodka, 1800 tequila, Chivas Regal scotch, Maker's Mark bourbon and a mixed cases containing Grand Mariner, Drambuie, sweet and dry vermouth in a 2:1 ratio and other things needed to make cocktails. They also added Squirt and Seven-up plus premixed mixers and frozen lime juice.

His Tac-50 was heavy at 26 pounds not counting the ammo or the MUNS. The ammo went ~4.5 ounces per round so that added ~22.5 ounces. The MUNS without batteries added 50 ounces and the batteries were 2 AA cells. Let's call it 73 ounces for a total of 31 pounds in round numbers. There was a picture in the literature for the MUNS that shows it mounted on a Tac-50:



That's the Tac-50, and I'm not too sure about the scope. It doesn't appear to be a US Optics or Nightforce. This is the Leupold Mk4 M1 16x40mm LR/T Mil Dot:



The Nightforce NXS 12-42x56mm:



And, the US Optics SN3 5-25x58 T-Pal:



The scopes are listed from least expensive to most expensive. Actually, they're probably listed in terms of weight, quite by accident, from lightest to heaviest. If your rifle weighs ~31 pounds, what do a few more ounces matter? The scope mounted on the rifle shown turned out to be a Leupold Mark 6.

Those 140 round battle packs of South African surplus seemed heavy at the time and they contained 9 140 round battle packs of 147gr ammo. The 500 round boxes of 175gr Sierra MatchKing seems to weight a whole lot more.

"So what are we getting ready for, World War Three?"

"Exactly; I've been on the edge of my seat since the Cuban Missile Crisis."

"Remind me; when was that?"

"October 1962 and I was stationed at Edwards. Heard Kennedy's speech on the radio and came home that night to 12 B-47s, each loaded with 2 nukes, sitting on the flight line, ready to scramble."

"1962 was a long time ago."

"Yep, over 52 years ago. The Cold War never ended, it just changed character and the current characters are Vladimir, Jong-un and Jinping. Chavez is dead and Castro is retired. They buried Nikita back in 1971."

She had a question about my firearms asking, "Are you sure all of those firearms are legal?"

“They are somewhere. The Extended HK416s aren’t legal here for several reasons; they have pistol grips and bayonet lugs, they’re select fire and have silencers. My M21 was legal except for the magazines and the silencer, but isn’t any longer. The shotguns are legal. The Taurus isn’t on the California approved list of the handguns and all 4 are silenced. I can’t begin to tell you how illegal the Tac-50 is; but, it’s silenced, is .50 caliber, and I have 6,400 rounds of ammo, some more illegal than the others. Don’t worry about it, they won’t take me alive.”

“But, what if they show up with a search warrant?”

“They can’t get into the shelter unless they know how to release the secret lock that keeps that road plate from sliding back.”

(He has a thing for secret panels. I assume it’s because he played *Clue* when he was young.)

Dream a Little Dream of Me – Chapter 2

“So, how long are you prepared to shelter?”

“For over a year; they could always hit Plant 42 and the initial radiation would be 3,000R/hr an hour after the strike. After 56 weeks, the residual radiation should be around 0.059R/hr. There won’t be much to see when we leave the shelter. If Chris’ racecar survives, it will be the only running vehicle in Palmdale until we can begin salvaging or can install the replacement computers. There won’t be a lot of survivors to worry about.”

“If that’s the case, why bother?”

“Look at it as an adventure, pitting our skills against theirs.”

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“You’re nuts.”

“So I’ve been told. Like I told our wives, I can recall as plain as day 12 B-47s, each loaded with 2 nukes, sitting on the flight line at Edwards during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Everyone has something they fear the most; in my case it’s a Global Thermonuclear War (GTW).”

“Never happen... the other side knows we’d nuke them into oblivion.”

“That was the premise of the Cold War, Mutually Assured Destruction. SORT was one in a long line of treaties and negotiations on mutual nuclear disarmament between Russia, and its predecessor, the Soviet Union and the United States, which includes SALT I (1969–1972), the ABM Treaty (1972), SALT II (1972–1979), the INF Treaty (1987), START I (1991), START II (1993), SORT (2003-2011) and New START (2010).”

“How many weapons are we limited to?”

“Under the terms of New START, the number of strategic nuclear missile launchers will be reduced by half. A new inspection and verification regime will be established, replacing the SORT mechanism. It does not limit the number of operationally inactive stockpiled nuclear warheads, which remain in the high thousands in both the Russian and American inventories. In summary:

Type	Limit
Deployed missiles and bombers	700
Deployed warheads (RVs and bombers)	1550
Deployed and Non-deployed Launchers (missile tubes and bombers)	800

“Let me ask you, do you really believe either side will honor those limits?”

“They have to if they signed a Treaty.”

“How many Treaties did the US sign with the Indians that they kept? I’ll save you from looking it up; the answer is none.”

“That’s different.”

“How, weren’t the Indian our enemies at the time?”

“Oh. I still don’t know why you built a bomb shelter.”

“I wanted one for a long time, but I don’t know why either because that was her decision. Have your wife ask my wife.”

It evolved that my wife had read the news too and Kim Jong-un was just immature enough to really scare her. So much so that she wanted a bomb shelter. Apparently she figured he would target LA and given the inherent inaccuracy of their missiles, assume it would end up in the Antelope Valley. She could have a point. My next purchase was directly from Avon Protection and I bought 7 of their M50 Joint Service General Purpose Masks and several pairs of the 36 hour filters. Talk about expensive!

After Avon had shipped and we received the masks, filters and Camelbaks, I went to Approved Gas Masks for level 2 suits, BR400s. The BATA HazMax 17” Overboot boots, 25mil US Mil-Spec Butyl Rubber Gloves, 7 pairs each of clear and tinted UVEX Genesis Impact Resistant Eyepieces and, of course several rolls of Chem-Tape Chemical Suit Seam Tape. Seven sets for 9 people? Well, you wouldn’t want their youngest outside if it wasn’t 100% safe and I applied the same rules to their oldest son’s 2 kids, so 1 set was a spare.

I bought the radios he uses for racing, 3 Motorola Radius P50 2 channel, crystal controlled radios. I also bought 3 Bearcat scanners at the same time. Business band radios have evolved a lot since then. Now, you can get 32-channel CM-300 in low band, vhf and uhf. You can also get 16 channel CP-200 portables. If you buy the CM-300s for your base and vehicles, you can cheat. First off, you license 4 channels or more. Second off, you acquire the CD that programs the radios for the unused channels.

It was arbitrary but I got the 2 frequencies on his VHF radios and licensed them and an additional 2 channels. That covered him and us, to a limited extent. After I got the CD copied to my computer, I went to work programming the 7 CM-300s and 14 CP-200s. With 7 gas masks, we had 7 portable radios in the lower range and 7 in the upper range plus a base station for the shelter, house, the Nissan, one for the neighbor and spares. He was dependable... he was still the biggest cheapskate I knew.

When the wife said we had the price, I called US Towers in Woodlake, CA. That's southeast of Fresno in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada's. I explained that I wanted a turnkey deal that included a HDX-689MDPL Tower with 3 standoffs, the heavy duty rotor, 20' chromolly mast, RCM-1000 remote control, MDPL-1000 drive motor and unless they didn't hear the first time, that was installed, cash on the barrelhead. First she said they didn't do that and I asked to speak to her supervisor. She put me on hold and came back on and said they'd use a contractor but wanted to know if I knew how much it would cost.

"Lady, I don't have a clue but if you want, give me a price and I'll give you 50% down; will a cashier's check be ok?"

"It will take a while to get it constructed, tested, delivered and installed."

"Fine, call up Kim Jong-un and tell him not to get his water hot."

"Thirty days and we'll have a contractor at your location putting in the base tomorrow. Could I have your address and phone number?"

"Forty-five sixty Moonraker Road, like the James Bond movie, Palmdale, California, 93552 and the number is 661-285-8501. We don't answer the phone unless caller ID identifies the caller and we want to talk to them."

"Our contractor will bring back your down payment and we'll schedule construction immediately. Anything else?"

"Nothing I can do anything about, thank you."

"Who was that?"

"US Towers; they be here tomorrow to install the base for the tower."

"What did you mean by 'nothing I can do anything about, thank you'?"

"She asked if I wanted anything else."

"Nice voice, huh?"

"Yeah, but you can never tell from a voice. Beauty is only skin deep but ugly is to the core. A person only has to learn that lesson once."

"And, you learned it twice. Would it be ok if she and I had Margaritas tonight?"

"Help yourself and mix them yourself. There's a can of frozen lime juice in the kitchen freezer. Offer Chris whatever he wants and I'll have a Coke Zero or maybe two."

It was a play on words; Coke had a product called C2 for a while. It tasted more like regular Coke than Diet Coke and was soon replaced with Coke Zero; which I wasn't in any hurry to try out. It turned out to be ok, but it still has that shelf life problem. The only way to compensate was to load up on regular Coke because if Kim did do something, I presumed it would draw China into the conflict and it might start getting dicey. Just guessing, you know.

With 100 stories under my belt, I probably had close to 350 disasters of one type or another, but for sure 100 GTWs. You should know that at this point in this tale, the title was *Title* since I haven't decided what to call it. *World War Three* just didn't have the right ring and neither did *Our Backyard Shelter* or *My Same Old Gun Collection*. I finally settled on *Dream A Little Dream of Me* by Cass Elliot (Ellen Naomi Cohen).

Besides, I haven't bought the Ruger Vaqueros or Winchester 1886s or 1892s. If you haven't priced it, Buffalo Bore ammo is expensive. Right there in the same ballpark with Black Hills, or more. While I'm on the subject of ammo, I found a *safe* place to store it, under the patio slab. That required having a section of the block at the bottom of the ramp removed and digging to just inside the edge of the patio. The contractor turned a corner and dug along the edge of the patio, adding solid concrete block as he went.

While the 1982 would handle the heavy loads, it was either original model Ruger Vaqueros or Ruger Blackhawks.

When he had the width I wanted, they started digging towards the house and laying block as they went. He put in the sole I beam at 7' and 3 of those adjustable support poles resting on 1' square concrete pads. The finished room was 14' by 14' and ample room for my ammo and munitions. The fourth wall was necessary to support the soil supporting the foundation.

"You ready to learn to shoot?"

"Do I have too?"

"Yep. You won't be allowed handle any weapon you aren't familiar with. We can start on the 5.56s and work our way up."

"What happens if we get caught?"

"What do you mean we, Kemo Sabe?"

"Huh?"

"Old Lone Ranger joke when they surrounded by Indians and the Long Ranger asks Tonto what they're going to do now?"

"In other words, I'm on my own?"

“Nah, I’ll just shoot them and we’ll hunt up a mine shaft. With those silencers, it’s not likely anyone will hear us. You get 3 magazines to shoot so make every shot count.”

“Only 90 rounds?”

“That is very expensive ammo.”

“Got any surplus?”

“There hasn’t been any available since Newtown. It’s a sign of the times.”

“In what way?”

“Obama, Biden and Feinstein are out to get the guns. I’m one of those *from my cold dead hands* types. And, I picked up something for you and the neighbors, Oregon Scientific Portable Public Alert Radio Model WR602. They’re small and intended to be worn on your belt or carried in a purse. They’re already setup for SAME, specific area message encoding. I programmed several AV stations and several LA stations. Wherever you are, you will be warned if the National Weather Service issues an alert. You can carry them during the day and place them on their charging stands when you get home.

“They’re not particularly expensive but could prove to be a real lifesaver. Do you think you could get used to wearing one?”

“I suppose so, if there was a reason to do so.”

“Pretend for a moment that an enemy was to attack the US for whatever reason. You would be immediately notified and should the situation warrant, head for home. You should be able to get really close before the attack occurred. One other thing while it’s on my mind, keep your gas tank at least $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ full at all times. Stopping for gas could take 10-15 minutes and eat up your safety margin.”

“Do you two actually carry firearms?”

“That would be illegal, wouldn’t it?”

“You didn’t answer the question.”

“You noticed; you’re just going to have to wonder and assume whatever you want, you will anyway.”

“The National Security and Homeland Security Presidential Directive (National Security Presidential Directive NSPD-51/Homeland Security Presidential Directive HSPD-20, sometimes called simply ‘Executive Directive 51’ for short), created and signed by Unit-

ed States President George W. Bush on May 4, 2007, is a Presidential Directive which claims power to execute procedures for continuity of the federal government in the event of a 'catastrophic emergency'. Such an emergency is construed as 'any incident, regardless of location, that results in extraordinary levels of mass casualties, damage, or disruption severely affecting the US population, infrastructure, environment, economy, or government functions'.

"The unclassified portion of the directive was posted on the White House website on May 9, 2007, without any further announcement or press briefings, although Special Assistant to George W. Bush, Gordon Johndroe answered several questions on the matter when asked about it by members of the press in early June 2007.

"The presidential directive says that, when the president considers an emergency to have occurred, an 'Enduring Constitutional Government' comprising 'a cooperative effort among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the Federal Government, coordinated by the President,' will take the place of the nation's regular government.

"The source text indicates that during a catastrophic emergency the federal government will cooperate as a matter of comity in order to protect the constitution:

"(e) 'Enduring Constitutional Government,' or 'ECG,' means a cooperative effort among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the Federal Government, coordinated by the President, as a matter of comity with respect to the legislative and judicial branches and with proper respect for the constitutional separation of powers among the branches, to preserve the constitutional framework under which the Nation is governed and the capability of all three branches of government to execute constitutional responsibilities and provide for orderly succession, appropriate transition of leadership, and interoperability and support of the National Essential Functions during a catastrophic emergency.

"Unclear is the phrase 'matter of comity' but the language supports the constitution, including separation of powers. (In the law of the United States, comity may refer to the Privileges and Immunities Clause, sometimes called the Comity Clause, in Article Four of the United States Constitution. This clause provides that "The Citizens of each State shall be entitled to all Privileges and Immunities of Citizens in the several States.")

"The directive ends by describing a number of 'annexes', of which Annex A is described as being not classified but which does not appear on the directive's Web page:

"“(23) Annex A and the classified Continuity Annexes, attached hereto, are hereby incorporated into and made a part of this directive.’ (24) Security. This directive and the information contained herein shall be protected from unauthorized disclosure, provided that, except for Annex A, the Annexes attached to this directive are classified and shall be accorded appropriate handling, consistent with applicable Executive Orders.”

“The ‘National Continuity Policy, Annex A, Categories of Departments and Agencies’, available from the Financial and Banking Information Infrastructure Committee website, indicates that ‘executive departments and agencies are assigned to one of four categories commensurate with their COOP/COG/ECG responsibilities during an emergency.’”

“Are you done?”

“I guess so, why?”

“Obama got Osama, not Bush.”

“Close, DEVGRU aka SEAL Team 6 killed bin Laden. If you want to get picky, the CIA located bin Laden and 4 years later, Obama authorized SEAL Team 6 to capture or kill him.”

“So why are you armed like World War III is right around the corner?”

“I think it is right around the corner. Have you been following the situation in Korea with Kim Jong-un? How about Iran and their pursuit for nuclear weapons? What about the fact the Japan has huge stockpiles of plutonium and the scientific knowledge and capabilities of building more Hydrogen bombs than China has. What about the Crimea and Ukraine? The same applies to the Germans. Their stockpile of plutonium isn’t as large as Japan, but they’re very good engineers and the science is published on Wiki for crying out loud. Then, there’s Syria.

“If I were to speculate, I would guess that Japan probably has as many as 400 weapons or more and Germany at least half that or more. According to published reports, China has over 400 with the Russians and US in a strategic tie. That doesn’t include stored, inactive weapons. Count those and we each have enough to destroy the planet. We both have large quantities of non-strategic weapons or tactical nukes.”

“Hog wash.”

“Maybe, maybe not; but I saved back enough KIO_3 for 12 people. Although I gave my sons enough for their families, I still have enough for 12 people. The radiation equipment was replaced with new monitors including an AMP 200, AMP 100 and AMP 50. The 200 has an upper range of 10,000R/hr, the 100 an upper range of 1,000R/hr and the 50 an upper range of 4R/hr. We also have 3 different sizes of direct reading dosimeters, 0-500mR, 0-100R and 0-200R. I even bought a DC-DRD 6 Hole Direct Reading Dosimeter Checker. What do you want for firearms?”

I expected his response... a pair of crossed fingers.

“I guess you’ll have to settle for Auto Ordnance M1 Carbines, I’ll pick up 4 of those plus 4 Springfield Armory M1911 PB9108LP Mil-Spec Full Size Parkerized 5” barrel pistols with spare 8 round magazines. Since we use Gold Dot, I’ll order another 6,000 rounds

for the pistols and 20,000 rounds of 110gr .30 Carbine Gold Dot. Considering we're going to need to practice, I'll also buy 1,000 rounds of their 200gr Full Metal Jacket. I usually go practicing once a month in the desert east of Palmdale."

"Do you have a gun safe?"

"No I don't; but, each firearm is equipped with a cable lock and only one person, besides me, has keys to the locks, the person assigned to that firearm. I, naturally, have keys to all the locks. I added shotguns to the adult packages, Mossberg 590A1 SPX with the OKC-3S bayonets, including slugs and buckshot ammo. I assumed you wouldn't want to carry 2 bayonets so I only got the bayonets for the Mossberg shotguns."

"What about your kids?"

"Lorrie is still in Lancaster or Palmdale and we haven't heard from Amy for over a year. Derek is in Arkansas and has my original 5 firearms. He's been having the expended brass reloaded and has acquired additional 230gr Gold Dot. Damon is on full military disability and is therefore on the NCIC prohibited list. He could get arrested for even trying to buy a firearm. Be that as it may, if I get the chance I'll get him a M1A standard model, Mossberg shotgun and a Springfield Armory M1911 PB9108LP Mil-Spec Full Size Parkerized 5" barrel pistol.

"He bought a small farm near Coulter, Iowa and the last I knew was putting in a root cellar/bomb shelter. It's not a large farm; it's more of an acreage with less than 5 acres. If you're interested, I can pull up the farm on BING Maps and show it to you sometime."

"I'd better be going. Thanks for the Earl Grey. I think I'll sort out some of the tools you gave me and put a toolbox in the shelter."

"Tanks."

As you no doubt know by now, North Korea was huffing and puffing and couldn't blow the 3rd pig's house down. Even an idiot wouldn't take the US on. He tried some of everything including activating his small missile force, cutting the hotline between Pyongyang and Seoul, and maintained his military on high alert. When he ignored China, some of us felt he'd cut off his nose to spite his face.

China was occupied with increasing their military infrastructure and Naval Fleet. A separate matter entirely, and Washington was concerned. They'd purchased additional fighters from Russia to give themselves time to complete the development of the J-20. They were probably further along with their program than Russia was with theirs. Russia had completed the 3 block I Borei class subs with 16 vertical tubes and was working on the block II 20 vertical tube models. The Bulava was to carry 6 warheads with a capacity of 10 per missile. They'd finally resolved the issues with the RSM-56 Bulava missile. For

whatever reason, the Borei class subs and Bulava missiles weren't included in the New START treaty. They were planning on building 8 new SSBNs. Five times 20 plus 3 times 16 equals 148 missiles with a possible 1,480 warheads.

And this is happening when we're reducing the number of D-5 warheads from 12; but START I reduced this to eight and SORT reduced this yet further to 4 or 5.

Then, there's China:

Japan laid claim to several Islands including the Kuril Islands (claimed by Russia at the end of WW II). China's territorial disputes with other countries include:

Both China (People's Republic of China) and the Taiwan (Republic of China) officially claim to be the legitimate government of "China", including Taiwan and nearby islands currently controlled by the Republic of China. The Republic of China (Taiwan) does not actively pursue its claims on the mainland.

10 features in the Yalu (Korean: Amnok) river are in dispute with North Korea.

Boundary with India in dispute; see Aksai Chin, South Tibet and the borders along the states of Arunachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand with Tibet Autonomous Region.

Portions of the boundary with Bhutan (China and Bhutan have not yet established diplomatic relations; nevertheless negotiations are ongoing as of 2008).

Claims Japan-administered Senkaku Islands (Diaoyutai), as does the People's Republic of China.

Paracel Islands administered and occupied by the People's Republic, but claimed by the Republic of China (Taiwan) and Vietnam.

Involved in a dispute with the Philippines over Scarborough Shoal.

Involved in a complex dispute over the Spratly Islands with the Republic of China (Taiwan), Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and possibly Brunei.

Exclusive Economic Zone disputes with North Korea in the Yellow Sea; South Korea in the Yellow and East China Seas; Japan in the East China Sea; Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia in the South China Sea.

I'm sure I missed some, but, you get the idea.

While I was concentrated on the Far East situation that involved China, North Korea and Japan, I was also keeping an eye on the Middle East, which mainly involved Syria, Iran and Israel. I spend the mornings going over the previous day's happenings in the Far East and the afternoons reviewing the day's events in the Middle East. SECDEF contin-

ued to increase our presence in the Far East and John Kerry spent most of his time on a plane to and from the Middle East and Far East collecting frequent flyer miles.

Dream a Little Dream of Me – Chapter 3

That excluded the one day each month when I drove out to the desert to try and keep my marksmanship skills at the highest possible level. Hauling around all the heavy hardware was for someone half my age so I developed a system. I put up all the targets first and then drove back to pistol range, parked and fired my pistols.

Next, I backed up to 100 meters and did the shotgun before moving back to 300 meters and working with the Extended HK416. Next, I moved back to 800 meters and used my homemade M21 before backing up to 1,500 meters and running a few rounds through the Tac-50. After I cased my firearms, I collected the targets and headed to the cigarette store where I bought 6 or 7 cartons before going to B&B liquors and adding to the liquor stash.

About the best I could do with the precision rifles was 0.6MOA on the .50 and 0.65MOA on the 7.62x51mm. The shorter range 5.56x45mm rifles ran about 0.9-1.0MOA but that was adequate at the range. Ammo was still hard to come by so I saved my brass and bought the bullets, primers and powders to have the ammo reloaded when I could find someone I trusted to reload the match grade ammo. I was still looking.

“How much liquor do you intend to buy?”

“I’m only going to fill that one set of shelves.”

“Why?”

“Why not? I’m about done anyway. All I need is a case of Jack Daniels Single Barrel.”

“Right... what will you switch to when you have that?”

“Grand Mariner, 1800 and frozen lime juice to keep you in Margaritas. You like the standard ratio 7:4:3 of 50% tequila, 29% Grand Mariner and 21% lime juice cocktail, don’t you? I use 3½ shots of 1800, 2 shots of Grand Mariner and 1½ half shots of key lime juice and serve it like you like on the rocks.”

“Where did you get that recipe?”

“Wiki, where else?”

“Why frozen lime juice?”

“That’s the easiest way to get the Mexican or Key lime juice.”

“She and I filled in some of the STS food supplies.”

“I know... could you put some Icy Hot on my back?”

“Do you think we should stock more of that?”

“I would; between the 2 of us we’re using about a bottle of the roll-on a month. You probably want to get some of those large back patches from Kaiser the next time you fill prescriptions.”

“Anything else?”

“Try to talk the Doc into prescribing 90 0.5mg Xanax TID for you due to the stress you’re under.”

“I’m not under that much stress.”

“I know but it would allow us to increase our supply, quickly. We should be able to accumulate ~1,400 tablets a year. You know good and well that if we do end up in the shelter, it’s going to take Xanax or liquor to keep everyone from going crazy.”

“Why do you think that?”

“The shelter is 44’ long by 24’ wide or 1,056ft². For the planned occupants, that’s 117ft² per person. The odds favor the actual population to be 14 not 9 or 75ft² per person. Considering how our daughters get along, we’re going to have to sedate one or both of them, plus the neighbor’s youngest.”

“Ok, I’ll ask.”

“Maybe you can get our youngest to ask too since she doesn’t take anything they prescribe including her insulin. We can store her insulin for her and have more for ourselves. The same applies to the syringes. I can use your syringes in a pinch, I just don’t like to. It’s better now that I’ve settled on 15 units in the morning and a variable number of units at night. The only issue now is the needle length.”

“You went shooting yesterday; how’s your ammo?”

“I still have a few rounds of practice ammo but we should consider a case each of 175gr and 62 gr Black Hills along with one case each of the shotgun shells and one case each of the Speer .45ACP Gold Dot and four boxes of .380.”

“Which firearms do you intend to let the neighbors use?”

“My original thinking was the M1 carbine and Springfield Armory M1911s. My current thinking is to add 2 Loaded M1As equipped with Sadlak mounts and less expensive scopes. No suppressors and I believe I can come up with 2 complete rifles for less than I have invested in the M21. Still get the IMBEL made Springfield Armory 1911s. I also think that I’ll ask our dealer about another pair of 590A1 SPXs. We can just increase the

ammo supply for the pistols and shotguns and pick up some 168gr ammo for the M1A Loadeds and HK417s.”

“Black Hills?”

“No, maybe match grade Prvi Partizan (PPU); but definitely not Wolf; so basically whatever I can find at a reasonable price.”

“Anything you want in the meanwhile? Surely you missed something.”

“Now that you mention it, it would sure be nice to have an AWC Badlander.22 Ruger SS MKIII Suppressed Pistol in Charcoal Black.”

“One or two?”

“If you want one, we’ll need two.”

“Call Phoenix.”

“I’m on it. Mind if I ask a question?”

“You can ask. If I answer, it will be the truth.”

“Do you have a burr under your saddle blanket?”

“Nope. We don’t have horses or tack.”

“What I was asking boils down to what came over you? You humored my gun collecting for 35 years but ignored my being a prepper. Now, not only are you supporting my rather unorthodox collection, but want one of everything I do.”

“I haven’t asked for a Tac-50 or an M21.”

“I sort of figured that was just a matter of time.”

“Maybe on the M1A. I’d rather you to buy the cowboy guns first. Then we’ll consider a Loaded model M1A equipped the same as your M21. I’m concerned that we’re over-looking something.”

“We haven’t bought the knives yet, nor the cowboy guns. I did a story on what it would take but where would we get the horses and tack? And, after we got them, where would we board them? I definitely would be interested in getting a mare for you and a gelding for me. I’d prefer those new Winchester 1886s and 1892s along with original Ruger Vaqueros in .45 Colt with 7½, 5½” and 4⅝” barrels.”

“What kinds of knives?”

"I'd like to get Buck 110 folding hunters, something in an automatic knife, a Cold Steel Bowie knife, a Spetsnaz shovel or folding entrenching shovel and a 24" Latin machete. We can get full power ammo from Buffalo Bore. It's like the Back Hills, expensive. Those Brenneke slugs cost as much as the Black Hills.

"Now I know what we overlooked."

"What?"

"LTS and STS food for 5 for years."

"Our daughters?"

"Of course."

"We'd better get 5 more WR602s and more dosimeters while we're at."

"Can the shelter handle 5 additional people?"

"It can but will cut the square footage per person to 75ft². You're going to need to do the shopping for those two because I want nothing to do with it. We're lucky we have enough storage room. We should probably buy Therm-a-rest inflatable sleeping pads and a good brand of sleeping bags."

"Firearms and camping gear?"

"No firearms unless it's shotguns. We'll have to increase the PPE for 3 additional adults and 2 teenagers. I'll have to think about getting them camping gear."

"How much did the Tac-50 cost?"

"It ran ~25 plus the cost of the ammo. I need to call Nissan and arrange for a full set of replacement computers while I'm at it. I should probably get a drum or two of oil, extra filters plus bulbs and fuses at the same time."

"Do we have enough for a second Tac-50?"

"We should by the time they get one built; change your mind?"

"Yes. I want the A1R2 with the reduced recoil."

"You do know how heavy it is, right?"

"If you can tote one, I won't have a problem."

Since California only allows one handgun purchase every 30 days, I used the Strawman for the additional firearms and skipped the M1 Carbines. I opted for 2 Loaded M1As and one Super Match M1A. The Loaded M1As were the same as my original and the Super Match was identical to the first. Used the same scope mounts on all 3 rifles, the Sadlak. I put the same scope on the Super Match, but got cheaper scopes from Brownells for the Loadeds and picked up another pair of PT1911Bs with the extended threaded barrels and suppressors.

Our dealer got the pair of 590A1 SPX and we ordered more shells. Ammo was slowly starting to become available and the shells and pistol ammo wasn't a problem. Neither was a case of standard velocity CCI .22LR. She bought a handgun case, just in case. When we got the latest purchase from our Strawman, he observed that most of the things he'd gotten us were sold to us at MSRP. He was making a killing on the difference between 'retail' in Arizona and MSRP in California.

"It's a shame having to use a strawman to buy things that should be available in all 50 states."

"Nice second source of income for me. Are you going to need anything else?"

"Hornady 750gr A-MAX match, more Black Hills 175gr BTHP and 168gr BTHP."

"If you'll get the Black Hills, I arrange for the Hornady. The thing is you're going to have to pick up whatever I get for you 'cause those California agricultural inspectors at the border seem to recognize me now."

"I can do that if it lowers the price any."

"It will, but not by much."

I stopped at Lowe's and picked **No Smoking** signs for the armory. It wasn't like the boxed up stuff could be set off by a cigarette, but, it pays to be extra careful. I also picked up 5 more M50s and additional filters. I went with cheaper Tychem suits, boots and gloves.

When he called, she and I made trip to Phoenix, splitting the driving. I'd had Black Hills deliver the 7.62x51mm ammo to him and we rented a U-Haul for a one way from Phoenix to Lancaster. The illegal ammo went in first and the legal ammo after it. The firearms were hidden in the storage space in the Nissan, disassembled.

"Any fruits or vegetables? What's in the U-Haul?"

"No fruits or vegetables and the U-Haul has our order of .308 Winchester ammo."

"Pull over there so we can check the trailer."

“Why do you need that many cases of .308?”

“I do a lot of target practice. We have really nice registered California legal M1As.”

“That’s a lot of ammo just to practice with.”

“Especially since it is match ammo.”

“Do you compete?”

“Not at the present; I do like to keep my hand in and so does she.”

“Okay, you’re clear.”

“You know he’s going to remember us, don’t you?”

“I figured and bought extra.”

“How much extra?”

“Thirty cases of 168gr and 15 cases of 175gr.”

“How much did you overload the U-Haul?”

“About double. I overfilled the trailer’s tires and have been keeping the speed down.”

“I noticed you weren’t driving as fast as you used to. I thought it was because you haven’t driven a lot since you got your license back. It never occurred to me it was because of an overloaded trailer.”

“Did that food come in?”

“We received the Walton order but Emergency Essentials and Nitro-Pak both backordered. Expected ship date on both is about 3 weeks. I had Walton ship by hot shot truck and those beans and rice were expensive.”

“How are we on Folgers and toilet paper?”

“At the moment we have 53 trays of Folgers and I stored the extra Charmin in the armory. When did you put up the **No Smoking** signs?”

“Just the other day. I don’t think we need them but if you’re storing the toilet paper with the ammo and explosives, it might not be a bad idea.”

“Will we be able to bring more Charmin into the shelter?”

“It shouldn’t be a problem... I’ll get it if we need it.”

“How are you going to get the ammo into the armory?”

“Stack it on the four wheeler and let it roll down on its own with me on a belay. When I get it to the bottom, I’ll use the appliance cart. Might take a couple of days so we’ll unload it first and return the trailer. I had the pipe socket put in at the top of the ramp for a steel post that I can wrap a few turns of rope around for the belay.”

“How many people do you actually expect to show up to use the shelter if it’s needed?”

“Not more than 16. It’s possible that the neighbor across the street and the one around the corner might show up. It’s equally possible that our youngest daughter won’t show up.”

“You really don’t like her, do you?”

“Do you? We were so far behind the 8 ball because of her we couldn’t live anything resembling a normal life. A few times the only way we had money for doctor’s appointments or prescription refills was what extra cash I earned from my editing those stories.”

“Why do you keep editing them?”

“Nobody is perfect and both he and I have managed to miss errors despite the number of times they’ve been read. Besides that, I enjoy those stories. Often times, I’d rather read his than write a new one.”

“Do you have one in the works?”

“I do. It sort of explains why I’ve made the various choices in my previous stories. Once you get in synch with your new M21, you should be able to hit a target at 1 kilometer. With that Tac-50, you might be able to double that under the right conditions.”

A few days later, I needed a hand moving some things to the shelter storeroom and asked my neighbor to help.

“You have more?”

“We just added 2 Loaded M1As, 2 shotguns and two pistols plus another Tac-50 and a second Super Match. The Loaded M1As will have moderately priced scopes and bipods. I already moved the ammo but threw my back out and that’s why I needed your help.”

“I thought you said you were buying M1 Carbines.”

"I changed my mind. These particular rifles shoot 168gr bullets and are accurate past 600 meters. The Super Match is hers, as is the extra Tac-50. I bought 168gr Back Hills for the 2 H&K rifles and some Serbian Prvi Partizan for the Loadeds. It's match grade too so it should be ok in the M1As."

"Do you have bayonets?"

"Have you ever seen the bayonet for the M14?"

"Un-un."

"The blade is less than 7" long. And, the flashhiders don't have bayonet lugs."

"Can you get flashhiders with bayonet lugs?"

"From Fulton Armory but they won't ship to California."

"That hasn't slowed you down so far."

"True. I don't want any stubby little bayonets. Now if I can get some reproduction M1 Garand bayonets with the long blade, I could see about having them fitted to the flash-hider."

"Is that legal?"

"The bayonets are only sharpened on one side so they're legal. It's the bayonet lug that's illegal; so, yes and no. Like you said, it hasn't slowed me down so far."

"What's through that door?"

"Which door?"

"The door on the house side of the ramp at the bottom."

"That's the armory. Nothing in there that would interest you."

"I wondered where you were storing your bombs and rockets."

"That's where the extra ammo is stored."

"Along with your bombs and rockets?"

"If you insist... sure, why not."

If I humored him, he'd take it as such and hopefully dismiss the idea of our having bombs and rockets; which we had in ample quantities. Have to be careful to avoid a fire,

that's what got that guy in the Inland Empire caught. I can't believe he actually did anything wrong, he just stored ammo and reloading supplies. Which reminds me, I'd better check about those Winchester rifles, the Ruger Vaqueros and the Buffalo Bore ammo.

While John Wayne usually carried a Colt with a 4¾" barrel, we'd only copied him so far and used the Big Jake rigs. Two rigs and 4 scabbards could be had from Kirkpatrick for about a grand. The real expense would be the ammo. With an I-beam supporting the patio over the armory, there was no way it should come down so our ammo should be secure.

The 2 used Ruger Vaqueros weren't that hard to find. The Winchester dealers were on allocations and it took 4 dealers to get the 2 rifles and 2 carbines. The 1886s were available in 24" barrels but the 1892s were only available in 20" barrels. No one had one available for MSRP. Such is life and we still didn't have horses. I'm not too sure about getting them either, I remember Salina and Mr. Toad's Wild Ride. Maybe a gelding would be ok.

Buffalo Bore turned out to as bad as or worse than Black Hills. I think their cheapest ammo started at 2 bucks a round. Got 1,000 of the .45-70-405 at \$3.25/round and 5,000 of the .45 Colt in the +P 260gr deer grenade at \$2.02/round. They paid the shipping and that probably explains why it cost so much (you were actually paying the shipping indirectly). As long as it was SAAMI spec... the only SAAMI spec it followed was dimensions.

At this point we were essentially done preparing and had to maintain rather than add to. The neighbor lady came down once a week and took what she needed for the week and the wife and she went shopping every other week so we were never far from having the shelves full. As we used the LTS, items were reordered when a container was taken from the shelf and transferred to the pantry. We did those orders online monthly.

We watched the sales and the specials too. There is a difference between sale items and specials. Often specials are overstocks that they're selling for full price while sales are usually merchandise that's been on the shelf for a while and not moved. It's being sold so they can add a different product. Specials and sales are good if you save money and don't have to give up anything to get them.

I can give you an example that's not a bargain – the Jack-in-the-Box Sirloin Cheeseburger:

1. Serving Size 1
2. Calories 942
3. Calories from Fat 580
4. Total Fat (g) 64
5. Saturated Fat (g) 21
6. Trans Fat (g) 2
7. Cholesterol (mg) 129

8. Sodium (mg) 1989
9. Potassium (mg) 621
10. Carbohydrates (g) 51
11. Dietary Fiber (g) 3
12. Sugars (g) 9
13. Protein (g) 41

Add an order of regular french fries:

1. Serving Size 3.76 oz.
2. Calories 333
3. Calories from Fat 138
4. Total Fat (g) 15
5. Saturated Fat (g) 1
6. Trans Fat (g) 0
7. Cholesterol (mg) 1
8. Sodium (mg) 609
9. Potassium (mg) 433
10. Carbohydrates (g) 45
11. Dietary Fiber (g) 3
12. Sugars (g) 0
13. Protein (g) 4

That a whole day's worth of calories and 2 days' worth of salt. So much for a low fat diet, it has 79 grams of fat. It might have been worth if it had tasted good... and you get 2 days' worth of potassium and it's not the best choice for a diabetic.

Dream a Little Dream of Me – Chapter 4

You have to understand that just because we're ready; neither of us wants to take on Kim Jong-un, Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping or the new Iranian president, Hassan Rouhani as a challenge. They can do what they do and we'll keep doing what we're doing. In this case, time is on their side. Of course, the Obama-Syria crisis was incredibly difficult to follow and dimes to donuts, it was the news that got the wife worked up enough to build the backyard bomb shelter.

I never thought I'd live to see 65, let alone 70. I was 72 on my last birthday and Obama still hasn't gotten an assault weapons ban, except in California. Colorado outlawed large capacity magazines and 2 Senators got recalled. Joe looks like he wants to run in 2016, but, so does Hillary. We need to elect a Republican and let him or her mess it up for 8 years. Two years ago it looked like Kim Jong-un was going to start a war but he turned out to be just making noise.

The one thing that he did do that really hurt South Korea was the closure of the Kaesong joint-industrial zone. It began to hit deals between South Korean manufacturers and foreign buyers almost immediately. Meanwhile, not a shot was fired nor a missile launched and nuclear weapons testing was deferred to 15Apr15. That one had the ominous double signature of fusion weapon. We're waiting to see if Kim follows up with a missile test.

North Korea supposedly launched a satellite on 12Dec12 and followed it up with a nuclear weapons test on 2Feb13. The period that followed was referred to as the 2013 Korean Crisis.

Russia urged the United States and North Korea to show restraint. Russian foreign ministry official Grigory Logvinov stated, "We hope that all parties will exercise maximum responsibility and restraint and no one will cross the point of no return." A statement from Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov stated, "Our concern is that, along with a proper reaction Council Security, are being taken around North Korea unilateral actions that are manifested in the increased military activity: where we can get out of hand and fall into a vicious circle" also noted that "in principle negatively see any measure of parties in one way or another increase [in] tension, course, judge the situation by bellicose statements-which, incidentally, are not only from Pyongyang, but by the specific measures that either party can perform, then take a position".

Following the declaration of a "state of war" the Foreign Ministry issued another statement which said that the attitude of the government towards "any step that one way or another leads to the escalation of tensions on the Korean peninsula is negative." He also said he hoped that "all parties to the conflict to act with maximum restraint and responsibility for the future of the Korean peninsula." He added that is "in touch with members of the sextet's nuclear program of North Korea in order to prevent the situation gets out beyond political boundaries and diplomatic." On April 8, in a joint news conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel during his visit to a trade fair in Germany,

President Putin said “I would make no secret about it, we are worried about the escalation on the Korean peninsula, because we are neighbors, And if, God forbid, something happens, Chernobyl which we all know a lot about, may seem like a child's fairy tale. Is there such a threat or not? I think there is... I would urge everyone to calm down... and start to resolve the problems that have piled up for many years there at the negotiating table.”

Main Stream Media is carrying information that would lead one to believe that their next missile test will occur during the next week. (Ban Ki-moon became the first UN secretary general to visit the Pentagon, during 2013, holding talks with US military leaders on the crisis over North Korea, the Syrian situation and a planned peacekeeping mission in Mali.)

Ban had asked for the meeting amid mounting tensions on the Korean peninsula and drastic threats from the regime in Pyongyang, officials said.

Ban was welcomed with an honor guard at the steps to the Pentagon before a 30-minute meeting with Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey.

The talks focused on North Korea as well as planned or potential United Nations missions in Mali, Somalia and Syria, a senior defense official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told AFP.

“There was a lot of discussion on North Korea” and the risk of “misjudgment and miscalculation,” the official said.

Ban, who served in the past as South Korea’s foreign minister, has warned that a minor incident could trigger an “uncontrollable” situation after North Korea warned of impending nuclear war.

The Pentagon’s intelligence reporting on North Korea grabbed headlines last week when a lawmaker revealed that the Defense Intelligence Agency had concluded Pyongyang likely had succeeded in producing a nuclear warhead that could be placed on a ballistic missile.

The assessment went further than previous statements by top officials about the state of the North’s nuclear program, but US intelligence officials later played down the report, saying it did not represent a consensus among the country's spy agencies.

Ban’s visit came as North Korea responded for the first time to an American offer to return to the negotiating table, saying it would enter talks only if pre-conditions were met, including a withdrawal of UN sanctions and a permanent end to US-South Korea joint military exercises.

But South Korea promptly dismissed the response and US Secretary of State John Kerry called the North's stance "unacceptable."

Apart from North Korea, Ban's talks at the Pentagon covered a UN peacekeeping mission in Mali due to take over from French troops as well as "common US and UN interests" in Somalia and Syria, the US official said.

Ban's office said the secretary-general "expressed his condolences for the victims of the tragic bombing in Boston."

Speaking of Boston, the kid was awake and responding to questions in writing the Sunday after the bombing. I hope they get away with not reading him his Miranda Warning. Authorities said, "He is not going to be read the Miranda warnings," ABC News Senior Justice Correspondent Pierre Thomas said Sunday. "They are going to use the Public Safety Exception, and dive in without advising him of his right to remain silent. They are taking this extraordinary step because there could be an imminent threat still out there. ... There's deep, deep concern about the amount of ammunition, guns and working bombs these men had."

When we had our Skype Chat one Saturday after they captured the Boston bomber, I told Jerry and Ken we'd all be better off if he died in the hospital. That was 2 years ago and I still believe I was right when I said it. I was concerned with radical Muslims within the US putting up a fuss. They did, but it didn't really amount to much. A few unexplained things happened, like someone taking out one of those Extra High Voltage transformers with rifle fire. It took a week to replace it and slowly restore the grid.

There was the Mississippi River flood of 2013 that happened around the same time, but that's just Mother's Nature. We were just starting our actual prepping, planning actually, in late April waiting for the kid to move out. May and June of 2013 were very unpleasant for everyone in our house.

Nothing happened after the grid got taken down except it took a while bring it back up. They had to do that in stages so they didn't pop some breakers or something like that. The northeast was dark for many nights. The only thing the FBI determined was that a .30-06 AP round had been used. There have to be thousands of rounds of that stuff left over from the Korean War. If no one else has it, we could probably get it from the Greeks.

After WWII, Greece used the following US weapons:

Springfield 1903 Bolt Action Rifle
M1 Garand Semi-automatic Rifle
M1 Carbine Semi-automatic Carbine

Periodically, Greece sells some of those 8 round enbloc clips of .30-06 back to the DCM/CMP. I checked with them back in April of 2013 and they were basically *Sold Out*.

The reason why the Korean missile launch is so important is the same reason it was so important back in 2013. There was a debate going on whether or not to shoot the missile down and the consequences if we did shoot it down. The DDGs back then had the SM-3 (RIM-161). The DDGs there now have the SM-6 (RIM-174). The SM-3 is primarily used and tested by the United States Navy and also operated by the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force. Guess you should say primarily operated by the Japan Maritime Self-Defense force because the US is using the SM-3 and the SM-6. How do I know this? It's simple really; I was doing some research for a story and was reading the Wiki page on the 2013 Korean Crisis. Towards the bottom of the page, it mentioned that the DDGs deployed there could also deploy the SM-6. So I looked it up and if memory serves, the USN was going to deploy them during early 2015.

Since its early 2015 (late April) I assume they have been deployed to take down North Korean missiles if necessary. And, yes Virginia, you can buy ammo and magazines again under the same rules that applied when they again became available in late 2013. I'm tempted to buy 25 of the CMI 25 round magazines and 10 of the X-Products 50 round drum magazines. You did know that they changed their name, right?

Of course that recognizes that a bunch of states got caught up in the liberal hysteria and passed all kinds of really stupid laws regulating firearms. Where did New York come up with the 7 round limit on magazines? Best guess... from the venerable M1911 which held 7 rounds until someone figured out how to make it hold more. It seems like they love to pass *ex post facto* (retroactive) laws. It was legal when you bought it but isn't legal under the new law. These situations are normally handled by grandfather clauses that allow you to keep what you owned before the law changed. Example: Pre-ban magazines.

Apparently Magpul did a massive production run while they were in the process of moving out of Colorado. They were almost meeting demand and in view of the extraordinary demand for magazines and ammo, that was remarkable. Demand for M14/M1A magazines were first filled with the 5 and then the 10 round magazines. CMI manufactured both a SS and parkerized 20 round and must have divided their production based on the ratio of their previous sales. The last to become available was the 25 round magazines. I was on the phone to Phoenix the minute I heard and he was already holding 25 of the 25 round CMI and 10 of the X-Products 50 round drums. PTR also moved from Connecticut.

Back to the present. I suggest a quick run to fill in any STS we were short on, emphasizing feminine hygiene, toilet paper, coffee and more batteries and bulbs. I was only aware that we had 2 of the 120 hour candles. Right, 2 candles and 4 cases more. We were also sitting on a 6 month supply of the most critical drugs except insulin of which we had a 12 month supply and enough syringes and alcohol swabs.

My youngest son was out of the Army, retired with 20. He had a decent job working for the University and was going to night school working on his Doctorate in History. His ex-

wife had a good job as an athletic coach. The scheduled deployment to Afghanistan had been cancelled. My older son lived on his 4 plus acres southeast of Coulter. About the only thing he faced was if someone nuked F.E. Warren extensively.

We, on the other hand, lived in a possible target city and weren't that far from the largest area of civilization on the west coast. Then, there was Diablo Canyon which was about 175 miles northwest of Palmdale. Would they scam the reactors if missiles were incoming or would the operators simply scam? With LA 50 miles southeast and Diablo Canyon 175 miles northwest, we were caught in middle. Assuming they didn't nuke Plant 42.

Just because operators scam reactors, doesn't mean they're safe. They still generate huge amounts of heat and take years to cool off. That was the problem at Fukushima Daiichi.

While I'm worried about WWII, who should show up but agents of the California Department of Justice looking for the M1A Loaded and Mossberg shotgun I gave to Derek. They didn't know about the handguns because none of the 3 was registered. I told them that they were free to search when I'd seen the search warrant or they could call my son and verify that I gave him all of my weapons in June of 2012. Semi-automatic rifles that accepted a detachable magazine became illegal in 2014 and I was a 'mental' patient.

I dialed him for them and told him to answer their questions, and then handed the phone to the agent. I don't know what he told the agent but he asked for the empty .45ACP shell casing and they left. It isn't cool to pull the trigger on a cocked PT1911B with a round in the chamber and both safeties off, they're very loud. One of the 4 rules of firearms safety saved the day... it wasn't pointed at anyone.

By the way, they obviously didn't know about the backyard shelter or all the fuel stored there or the firearms in the shelter or what was in the room underneath the patio slab. I assumed that Sacramento would be a target anyway.

Speaking of the shelter, when I realized that we were about 2,000+ gallons short on diesel, we rewired the shelter to include 12vdc fixtures. They were powered by 12 Concorde AGM PVX-12150HT Sealed Deep Cycle Battery, 1215 Amp Hour, 2 Volts each wired in series to create 2 12vdc banks and the 2 banks wired in parallel with the generator battery charger wired to recharge them. The alternator on the generator that recharged the batteries put out 90amps at 12vdc. They would also run the Safe Cells when the generator was powered down. And then, since the generator wouldn't need air when it wasn't running, I put a cutoff between the batteries and the generator Safe Cell. The batteries were heavy and expensive, 124 pounds and \$637 each.

It was during that period in 2015 when every country in the world was holding their breath over North Korea's next nuclear test when IT happened. As near as we could piece out from radio amateurs later, North Korea had continued to assemble the old gun type of nukes like we used on Hiroshima and the weapons were in the 10kT range.

They built more than a few and when they were ready, they reopened the Kaesong joint-industrial zone. The weapons were in packing cases at Kaesong and labeled with labels indicating they were a shipment of parts for various destinations in the US.

According to one Ham, they were received in the US by North Korean operatives and stored in climate controlled storage rooms. He said they were in 12 locations around the country and they were dirty bombs. By dirty, he meant that the tamper was uranium and not lead. Thus they put out enormous amounts of radioactivity, and being ground bursts, a lot of fallout. He didn't reveal how he knew and might have been speculating.

They didn't put a bomb in New York City, electing to put it in Newark, NJ so New York would be bathed in fallout. They were obviously counting on the fallout more than the actual nuclear detonation. However, if you recall your history, we wiped out Hiroshima. That bomb (*Little Boy*) was detonated at ~1,968 feet with a yield of ~13kT. The Nagasaki bomb was the plutonium implosion bomb (*Fat Man*) and exploded at ~1,650 feet with a yield of ~21kT. Hiroshima received more damage because that bomb was on target.

In this case, it didn't really matter that the bombs were only 10kT and ground bursts because North Korea counted on the radiation and fallout doing the major damage. Moreover, no one was certain which country or group to blame for the 12 detonations. From Boy Kim's perspective, he wanted to do the damage without the glory of being the first country to nuke the US.

That NWS SAME radio went off just before dawn announcing the detonations and recommendations for everyone to take cover. She started moving things to the shelter and I went 2 houses down to wake the neighbors. He was already up and I let him listen the message as it repeated.

"Really?"

"Told you; empty out your refrigerator and bring the stuff to the shelter. If you want, grab D... and D... and we'll make room."

"Really?"

"Yes, really. Get a move on, the radiation could be here in one or two hours. I have to check the weather station to get the wind speed and direction to know if we're in danger."

Lorrie had her weather radio on and apparently Amy didn't, so I presume that Lorrie called Amy because Amy and the kids showed up before Lorrie and her significant other (her first marriage ended in divorce so she didn't remarry, electing to be a domestic partner, twice). Amy had a garbage bag of clothes and nothing else. Lorrie emptied her refrigerator and brought clothing. By then, I'd helped the wife empty the food from the refrigerator and freezing compartment and we were boxing up the contents of the pantry

shelf in the kitchen. She was packing, mostly in white garbage bags, and I was moving the stuff.

When we had everything moved, we locked up the house after moving the pantry shelf to the shelter. She put the things in the refrigerator and the upright freezer. The neighbors were doing the same and we finished up about an hour into the event. The neighbor and wife and live at home child made 3. The wife and I made 5. Their oldest, his significant other and 2 kids made 9. Lorrie and her significant other made 11. Amy and her 2 made 14 and D... and D... made 16.

We were so over capacity, we might be in trouble. According to an old Civil Defense handbook, a person needs plenty of fresh air and a Safe Cell either puts out 120cfm or 60cfm of filtered air, depending on model. She bought the larger unit for the shelter and the smaller unit for the generator. We wouldn't be exchanging the air at an optimum rate but it was more than an adequate according to Sharon Hacker (Utah Shelter Systems). The gross floor space was 66ft² per person, tight but adequate.

The wind was out of the southwest running ~12mph and gusting to ~16mph. Assuming the nuke was 50 miles away, we wouldn't get fallout for ~3.125 hours at the earliest. As people settled in, we set up the second table and chairs and hooked up her TV and DVD/Blu-Ray. The neighbor lady had brought a 30 cup coffee urn and we slowly filled it from the coffee made by the Bunn coffee maker. Some bacon was fried, eggs scrambled and bread toasted to give everyone a solid breakfast with coffee, tea, milk and orange juice. I connected the AMP 100 to keep an eye out for the fallout.

Since the phone service was still up, we had access AT&T Uverse, while it lasted. Most of the discussion in the shelter centered not on the attack, but my armory; especially the fact that most pieces were illegal or had illegal additions. We were kidded about the weapons being so heavy we probably couldn't pick them up, let alone haul them far. She ignored them and I sort of went along with them because they'd never seen me really angry. The feature they found most interesting was the suppressors aka silencers aka improved flashhiders.

"Is it true that you can't hear the weapon firing?"

"Not really, they're suppressors and reduce the sound not eliminate it."

"But in the movies..."

"Hollywood uses blanks. They don't silence the sound, but they do make you invisible. That's why I've always referred to them in my stories as improved flashhiders. That's especially true at night because not only does the OpFor have the sound of your shot to get their attention, they have the muzzle flash. Reduce the first and eliminate the second and you're in pretty good shape."

"How do you shoot a firearm in the dark?"

“There are several ways. One, if they’re in a lighted space and you’re in the dark, you line them up in the scope and shoot. If both of you are in the dark, we’d have to use the night vision.”

“Do you have night vision for all of the rifles?”

“You’re kidding right? The night vision I picked up is state of the art and costs as much as or more than the firearms it’s mounted on. It’s all generation 3 with IT&T auto gated pinnacle tubes. The Universal Night Sights on the M21s are good to 1,000 meters and the Magnum Universal Night Sights on the Tac-50s are good to about 2,000 meters.”

“So, how long will we be down here?”

“Until we can safely leave.”

“Are you avoiding my question?”

“Not really. At the moment, I simply don’t know the answer. When a nuke detonates, it produces a burst of high level radiative isotopes that decay rapidly. One hour after the detonation, the level of radiation at ground zero is 3,000 Röntgens per hour. It begins to decay at that point based on the Seven-Ten Rule. Seven hours after that first hour, the level is ten percent of the 3,000R/hr or 300R/hr. Seven times seven hours after the first hour, it is down to one percent or 30R/hr. At 373 hours after the first hour, it’s down 0.1 percent or 3R/hr. At 7 to the 4th power or 2,401 hours after the first hour, the level is down to 0.3R/hr. At 7 to the 5th power or 16,807 hours after the first hour, it’s down to 0.03R/hr.

“No one will be leaving the shelter until the meter indicates a level of 0.5R/hr. Those trips will be limited to a maximum of 5 hours because the maximum daily exposure level is 2.5 Röntgens. Our first efforts will be to locate more diesel fuel for the generator and propane for the appliances. I have PRI-D for the diesel fuel and PRI-G to stabilize and restore gasoline.

“Since the attack was on Los Angeles and not on Plant 42, there should be survivors in the area. Because we’ve had the benefit of shelter, we may run into some of those survivors who want what we have and are willing to take it by lethal force. We will therefore be armed. If you choose not to be armed, I’d prefer you not leave. It’s still a free country and I’ll not force the issue. If you leave, unarmed, when the radiation level is at 0.5R/hr, don’t come back ‘cause you’re gonna die one way or the other.”

Dream a Little Dream of Me – Chapter 5

“So, you’re in charge? What should we call you, your Majesty?”

“Gary is fine with me. Look, I got a late start on this Survivalist business and didn’t really get into it as a way of life until 9/11/01. Even then, we didn’t do much but accumulate some food and in 2006 and later, the original firearms. Gave those to Derek in June of 2012 and didn’t start to replace them until the latter part of 2013. This time, I got what I wanted instead of what we could afford simply because we had more to spend.

“You can do whatever trips your trigger once we leave the shelter and my conscience won’t bother me one bit. We have 530 gallons of stabilized gasoline plus whatever is left in the diesel tank and propane tank. I would be very grateful if some of you would help refill the tanks and gas cans and drums. I know where we can get another 3,300 gallon propane tank and several 1,100 gallon tanks, all with cradles and the associate regulators and plumbing.

“There were things I wanted that weren’t in the budget like a bank or more of 24 2.2 volt submarine batteries, more inverters, photovoltaic panels, more Long Term Storage food and so forth.”

“But you sure got the guns!”

“Of course... it wouldn’t make much sense to acquire the other things unless we could keep them.”

“Don’t you have any flour left that isn’t whole wheat?”

“We’re down to 100 pounds of bread flour and have been grinding our own from hard white wheat. We’ve been grinding durum wheat for the semolina flour for fresh pasta. We have a very good motorized grinder to grind wheat, corn and several other grains. That’s what’s in those 6 gallon Super pails we have. We also make our own rolled oats for oatmeal and can grind Cream of Wheat. We didn’t get MREs for several reasons, not the least of which is the cost and the failure of many to pass a taste test. We did get Mountain House individual meal packets instead. We have single and two serving packages of the ones we like plus side dishes and desserts.”

“Gary, you better listen to this radio announcement.”

My fellow Americans,

Recently, an unidentified nation detonated 12 atomic bombs around our great nation. While the weapons were of small yield, they were engineered to create the most possible damage.

The measured yield of the weapons was approximately 10 kilotons each. The weapons used radioactive tampers and were exploded as ground bursts. As a result, twelve downwind areas received a significant amount of fallout. Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego on the west coast; Denver, Chicago, Cleveland and Dallas in the Midwest; New York City, Washington, DC, Norfolk and Atlanta in the eastern states were in the path of the fallout.

In nearly every case, the weapons were located upwind of the target cities resulting in a significant loss of life. There isn't an empty hospital bed anywhere in the country at the moment. Cleanup of the target locations is expected to take up to 18 months and the cleanup of the locations of the detonations, longer.

Effective immediately, I am declaring a National Emergency and imposing Martial Law with dusk to dawn curfews.

The national electrical grid is expected to be fully restored within 3 months. Natural gas supplies will become available as the electrical grid is restored. Petroleum products will also become available as the electrical grid is restored. FEMA has already begun moving conventional food supplies to most locations and will have basic supplies in all locations within a month.

Looting was primarily limited to the targeted cities and adjoining areas. Most of the looters received excessive exposure to the fallout and succumbed to radiation poisoning. Nevertheless, to ensure law and order, this administration has determined that nationwide martial law should be declared and it is effective immediately until the recovery is well underway.

In conjunction with this declaration, sales of firearms, ammunition and accessories are suspended until the state of martial law is lifted. Orders have been issued that looters will be shot on sight.

I ask all Americans to join me in prayer for the lives of those lost, the recovery of the injured and the rapid recovery of this great nation.

Finally, the Federal Bureau of Investigation in conjunction with the Department of Homeland Security and our various intelligence services are working around the clock to identify those responsible for this attack. Only when that has been established beyond doubt will we take action against the responsible party or parties. They should be aware that as you sow, shall also shall you reap.

Thank you and good afternoon.

"This changes everything significantly; when the California National Guard or the California State Military Reserve shows up we'll need to take a very low profile. The Army

forces will be dressed in ACUs and the Air Force forces in ABUs. I have an assortment of MultiCam uniforms I got from Propper and can probably outfit everyone. Patti and Sharon will have to hem the pants and we have two sewing machines. I also have an assortment of the subdued rank insignia.

“The military went to a modified MultiCam almost universally beginning in 2013. Some of the Designated Marksmen use M21s or M25s and most others use M4s. I wish my kid was here; he retired as an E-7 and is up to date on all this crap. I’ll try to reach him and see if they can make the trip. He’s still waiting on his new ID Card so he still has his active duty ID.”

“What difference will that make?”

“If we’re quick studies, maybe we can pass ourselves off as part of the Guard or Military Reserves. That will allow us to go armed and we have enough CP200s to go around ensuring we have comms. But, I only have the subdued insignia for Air Force and Army ranks.”

“You’re 72 Gary, there’s no way you can pass yourself off as Guard or Military Reserves.”

“It would be hard; I would have to shave every day. But, it would give us chance to requisition food from most of the grocery stores, especially Costco and Sam’s Club. The same should apply to topping off our fuel supplies. I was thinking of passing ourselves off as SpecOps since they have the latest issue weapons, Designated Marksmen and Snipers. Other than finding boots, we have what it takes in our stores.”

“What about boots?”

“There’s always Whites Surplus on Palmdale Boulevard. We’ll need brown or olive drab depending on Army or Air Force. If we can get Derek out here, he can get them at Edwards.”

“How are you going to get him here?”

“Wire him enough for gas, eats and motels. He can bring back the firearms, ammo and knives I gave him plus his fatigues. If they agree, they can be here in 3 long days.”

“They?”

“Him and his 3 kids.”

“You think it’s smart for him to bring his family?”

“Yep.”

“How come the phones still work?”

“The nukes were all ground bursts and didn’t generate much EMP. You heard His Highness, it shouldn’t take them long to pin down who built the weapons.”

“And then what?”

“Two choices. One, we launch a nuclear strike against the offender; or two, we do nothing.”

“Never happen!”

“Never say never! Ask Sean Connery. The remake of *Thunderball* was titled *Never Say Never Again*. The film’s title references how Connery said to the press in 1971 that he would *never again* play James Bond.”

“How do you know that?”

“I’m a movie fan and trivia buff. I read it somewhere, probably Wiki. All of us are fairly fit, excluding me, and I’m at the lowest weight I’ve ever been as an adult. The uniforms should fit and we have enough weapons to go around. I know that White’s has the Army’s Improved Outer Tactical Vest. I can only assume they have ESAPI plates and ES-BI side plates.

“I have 20 20-round magazines each for the Loaded M1As and 25 25-round magazines and 10 50-round drums for the M21s. The shotgun shells are all 3” Express Magnum loads of 00 buckshot or 3” Brenneke Black Magic 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ oz slugs. All the rifle ammo is match grade so we’ll get out to the desert and get everything sighted in. There is some Serbian ammo for the Loaded M1As, but its match ammo too.”

“When?”

“What’s the reading on the AMP 50?”

“Point zero seventy-eight.”

“Now’s as good of time as any. Let’s check White’s for the LBE before we go for target practice. Anyone need anything while we’re out?”

“How about some Marine Corps fighting knives?”

“Done. Anything else?”

“You have gas mask bags for the gas masks?”

“Yep. And they’re the latest military issue masks. Be that as it may, I doubt we’ll need them.”

Sharon had a message when we returned; Derek and his 3 kids were on the way, with travel orders, no less. He told her 3 to 4 days, depending on what they ran into. I asked her if she was willing to let Derek use her M21. After a few minutes thought, she agreed, provided she got an Enhanced HK416 plus an assortment of ordnance. I agreed since that left us with 3 select fire weapons.

She retorted 7 not 3. I reminded her we had 2 HK416s and 2 HK417s. She told me we had 6 Extended HK416s, not 2, all equipped the same. She explained that our Strawman called to tell me he had 4 more of the 416s with suppressors and a total of 100 magazines. She decided that we couldn’t have too many military firearms and bought all four plus extra Black Hills 62 gr Sierra MatchKing BTHP in 5.56x45mm, 24,000 rounds.

All we need to have for mounted cavalry were Patton Sabers and the horses with tack. That was still a problem since we couldn’t really pen them up in the backyard over the shelter and I said as much.

“I don’t know where you can get Patton Sabers, but the horses are boarded about half-way between here and Lancaster.”

“Oh really? How many did you get?”

“Eight. All geldings either 4 or 5 years old, with tack. Standard double rigged western saddles with saddle bags and lariat. I’ve got your guy in Phoenix looking for 4 more Ruger Vaqueros and 4 more Winchesters.”

“Any of them named Salina?”

“Nope. You should have seen yourself, it was hilarious. I’m holding off ordering the ammo until we get the firearms.”

“In view of the National Emergency declared by King Obama that could take a while.”

“Your guy said it wouldn’t be a problem. When Derek gets here, do you intend on letting him use my M21?”

“Yes, as we discussed.”

“No problem; I’ll use the Loaded, HK416 Extended and the old 590A1 and you can let him use mine, temporarily. I’d really rather have a Browning Hi-Power than the PT1911B, if you can get one.”

“Call Phoenix back and ask him to find you a new one with a total of 7 13-round magazines. I still have plenty of those Ripoffs CO-21V double mag holders. Get the regular barrel and add an extended threaded barrel plus a suppressor.”

The Browning Hi-Power, while an older design, cost more than the PT1911B. I made a note tell her to get Speer 124gr +P Gold Dot for the pistol plus some of the 124gr FMJ Lawman for practice. As I thought about it, I realized that I was fairly consistent when it came to purchasing ammo, always buying more than we needed, just in case. While the 9mmP was the standard NATO handgun round, I considered it under powered unless it was +P and Hollow Point.

If my readers believe I have no respect for the law, they're mistaken. I believe in the only legitimate firearms law on the books, ***A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.*** The purpose of the 2nd Amendment is clear, it's the peoples' guarantee against tyranny. But, you say, this is 2015 and while the 2nd Amendment was written in 1787 or thereabout, times change and it's inappropriate for folks to run around armed to the teeth.

I, without doubt, disagree with gun laws in general; especially when the book is judged by its cover. What difference does it make if an M1A has a bayonet lug? Does that short knife attached to the front of the rifle really make it more dangerous? Its blade is less than 7" long. Does the military really emphasize use of a bayonet? If so, it's probably limited to the Marine Corps.

Our enemies are, for the most part, equipped with Assault Rifles, much as we are. There are on the order of 100 million AK-47s floating around the world. The weapon is relatively simple in construction and practically fool-proof with its loose tolerances. One can be dipped in mud, removed and fired successfully nearly every time. The Russians have reinvented the wheel several times over, including switching to the 5.45x39mm cartridge. The basic action remains relatively unchanged.

“Dad?”

“Derek?”

“What's up?”

“Have any trouble getting past the Agricultural Inspection Station?”

“A little. Those dummied up travel orders came in handy. What's the situation here?”

“Well, the radiation level is about 50mR/hr and falling. We haven't seen the California National Guard, only the California Military Reserve. Since His Royal Lowness declared

a National Emergency and invoked Martial Law with curfews, we've had a bit of trouble getting out and about. As you can see, we're outfitted in MultiCam with everything except Unit patches. What we really need is military issue boots. I sort of figured that if you still had your military ID, we could give you the sizes and a fist full of cash and you could run out to Eddy's Airplane Patch and buy us the boots."

"Which Unit Patches?"

"Probably Cal Guard."

"Do you have the rank insignia, name tapes and things of that nature?"

"Yeah. We even have IOTVs with plates. In the firearms department, we have 2 Tac-50s, 2 M21s, 2 Loadeds, a bunch of 590A1s, 6 HK416 Extendeds and 2 HK417s with a bunch of suppressors, some night vision, some really good scopes, others almost as good and a couple of lesser models. Oh, everything American has Harris bipods and plenty of magazines and ammo."

"Ammo?"

"Black Hills 7.62x51mm in 175gr and 168gr, a good amount of 62 gr in 5.56x45mm, Hornady 750gr AMAX match and a few rounds of Mk 211 MP. Serbian match grade 168gr 7.62x51mm. Plus my usual assortment of bombs, rockets, 40mm grenades, smoke and that kind of stuff."

"And you hauled us all the way out here to get you some boots?"

"That and some quick instruction in military protocol for the non-veterans. The uniforms sort of make us look like military but the civilians don't have a clue about the way the military does things. My thought was we'd try to pass ourselves off as SpecOps."

"Yeah right. We'll have to get some hair dry to hide the gray hair. What were you thinking of using as your primary weapons?"

"An HK416 Extended backed up with my M21 and PT1911. Sharon and I have Walther PPKs in .380 for hideouts plus those 590A1 SPX shotguns. All the shotgun ammo is 3" Express Magnum 15-pellet 00 or Brenneke 1³/₈oz slugs. There is some Serbian 168gr match ammo for the Loadeds. Sharon agreed to swap her M21 for your Loaded and her SPX for your shotgun, temporarily. You can also try out her Tac-50 if you want."

"Supper ready? We haven't eaten in a few hours... we last ate in Winslow."

"Did you see the corner?"

"Yeah, big deal. What song was that?"

“*Take it Easy.*”

“The Eagles, right?”

“Right. I wasn’t really a fan at the time but I did like *Hotel California.*”

“About this nuke, where in LA was it?”

“I don’t really know. All I’ve heard was it was in a storage unit. If you heard Obama’s announcement, either they don’t have a clue or are hiding something. I wouldn’t put that past this administration. It seems like they covered up several things leading up to the 2012 election. As much as I didn’t care for Hillary, Kerry isn’t anywhere as good of a Secretary of State as she was.

“This administration seems to have its head buried in the sand and when someone makes a valid point about another failing they just ignore it or try another cover-up. His agenda absolutely doesn’t have the best interests of the American public included. At least he managed to temporarily impose gun control.”

“How much radiation did you get?”

“Only minor amounts, less than 100R/hr. It fell off pretty much on schedule, reaching about 10R/hr 7 hours and 1 R/hr 49 hours. At 343 hours, we were down to 100mR/hr and now, 2 months and a week it’s around 50mR/hr.”

“Do you have list of boot sizes?”

“Civilian, not military; but yes, I have the list.”

“What’s the local CNG unit?”

“I can’t remember.”

“I’ll go check them out tomorrow and find out where they get their unit patches. Then I’ll head up to Edwards and get the boots. How many pairs?”

“Two pairs for each of us plus military socks and T-shirts. We already have the uniforms and riggers belts.”

“Tan T-shirts, right?”

“I think so... whatever goes with MultiCam. How much is this going to run?”

“Do you have 3 grand available?”

“Don’t spend it all in one place.”

“I’ll check around first; they may have clothing sales.”

The new boots, socks and T-shirts fit just fine. He bought each of us 2 pairs of boots, 9 T-shirts and 12 pairs of socks.

“Will you explain something to me?”

“That depends on what you want to know.”

“How on earth did you get this collection of firearms, ammo and the other things? Every bit of it is California illegal.”

“The same way I got my first PT1911B, strawman purchases.”

“They’re illegal.”

“So is nearly every fun thing I like to do.”

“How did you pay for it?”

“First we refinanced the house to get a lower interest rate which cut the payment by \$300 a month. Then your sister moved out which gave us probably another \$500 a month. We started saving and buying. Then the trust fund actually distributed a large capital gain. That pretty much paid for the preps. It was like eating peanuts... once we got started, we couldn’t stop.”

“How did you get Mom aboard?”

“Don’t know... don’t care. She wanted one of everything I had plus she got her own Browning Hi-Power. That ordnance under the patio slab came from the same Arizona strawman; but, I’m pretty sure he stole it from Camp Navajo. It doesn’t matter to me where it came from since the rifle, accessories and ammo are all illegal in The People’s Republik.

“Did you have any problems buying the boots and clothing at Edwards?”

“Not really. They had to dig into stores to come up with some of the second pairs of boots. I went to the PX...”

“BX... Base Exchange... not Post Exchange.”

“Whatever. I got a full assortment of subdued IR rank insignia and right shoulder field forward subdued flags. The highest rank I got was O-6. I couldn’t get any local unit

patches for the left shoulders and I didn't get any specialties badges, intentionally. Want to be a Bird Colonel?"

"Only if you're the Command Sergeant Major."

"I figured on the CSM, whether you were a Bird Colonel or Captain. You're too damned old to be anything military while I'm about the perfect age for a CSM."

"I could be a recalled Captain or Colonel, either one. The problem is my limited military experience. I think the best bet would be Captain Bars. That would explain away my age to a limited extent."

"Just what do you intend to do?"

"Two points; first, security for the housing tract; second, mining available resources to refill our fuel supplies, adding additional food stores and lining up more ordnance, if possible. The problem with security is that most of those that sheltered with us are native Californians and don't cotton to firearms and lack the willingness to use them."

"How do you intend to equip Mary and me?"

"You can use Sharon's M21, an Extended HK416, your PT1911B, the Sauer and Sohn .32, Sharon's 590A1 SPX and her Tac-50A1R2. Mary can select either an Extended HK416 or a standard 20" HK417, a PT1911B and one of the 590A1 SPXs. You'll have to warn her about the recoil from the magnum shotgun shells, they really pack a punch, from both ends. Those Brenneke slugs at 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ oz are very accurate but nearly beat you to death. The same applies to the Express Magnum buckshot rounds. I couldn't get the 41-pellet no. 4 buck and had to settle for the 15-pellet 00 buck.

"The Black Hills rifle ammo is 62 gr BTHP match for the 5.56s, 168gr BTHP match is for the HK417s and 175gr BTHP match for the M21s. There's also that that 168gr .308 Serbian match for the Loadeds. The Tac-50 ammo is limited to Hornady 750gr AMAX match and Mk 211 MP. I changed my mind about the .45ACP and its all 230gr Gold Dot.

"There's an assortment of ordnance including 6 crates of M72, 10 crates of M67, 5 crates of Mk3A2, ditto the M14 TH3 and the M84s. Smoke, anywhere between 120 and 180 rounds of each color. The 40mm grenades are 6 canisters of M433, 2 canisters of M781 and 6 canisters of the M583A1. We only have 4 H&K AG-C/GLM under barrel launchers for the HK416s and HK417s. He was still looking for 4 more H&K AG-C/GLM under barrel launchers for the HK416s and HK417s. I prepaid so if he got them, he may ship them by FedEx or UPS."

We received a delivery from Phoenix later the same day containing the 4 additional AG-C/GLMs in one box plus several crates of M855A1 on stripper clips packed in bandoleers packed in ammo cans with 2 ammo cans per crate. An invoice was included for

the ammo; and based on the price it had to have come from Camp Navajo since the invoice barely covered the shipping costs.

We thus had combat ammo and sniping ammo for the Loadeds and H&K rifles. The Monarch shoulder holsters finally arrived from Andrews Custom Leather. Each was Andrews' version of the Galco Jackass rig with a triple magazine carrier on the offside including a sheath for a Cold Steel FGX series Boot Blade I substituting to the Gerber Mark I. I hadn't been cheap when it came to sharpening stones, buying two sets of DMT that included 6 diamond stones each: XX -120 Grit; X -220 Grit; C -325 Grit; F -600 Grit; E -1200 Grit and 4,000 Grit; and, EE - 8000 Grit.

This wasn't a case of TOM and Jerry was trying to outspend each other, I'd lost touch with my fellow writer. His website was still up, I found, on one of those times I got complete Internet access. The Internet was spotty, as was telephone service. In our case the Internet, TV and telephone came in on the same twisted pair and we either had all or none. And, even when we had all three, we sometimes couldn't get certain hubs. Technology, Bah! Humbug!

"Do we need anything else?"

"A mission."

"How about we sort the good guys from the bad guys and eliminate the bad guys?"

"That's what I had in mind, son. The problem is they are many and we are few. Plus our first goal is maintaining tract security."

"Did you forget the mining?"

"I thought we could check for bad guys while we are mining. We have to provide security for the miners. We should probably get the fuel first. Several service stations sell propane plus there's AmeriGas on the near west side. One delivery truck will hold a tank load. The diesel tank I put in turned out to be too small and we should probably find a diesel tanker first. I have plenty of PRI-D and PRI-G and it's fresh. We've got enough for 100,000 gallons of diesel... 10 5 gallon cans... and enough for 10,000 gallons of gasoline... 5 1 gallon cans.

"One truck of propane, a double tanker of diesel and refilling the gas drums should take care of the fuel situation. Then, we can start mining the grocery stores. Based on the overall lack of people we've observed since coming out of the shelter, I think most of the Palmdale population bugged out. That should leave a reasonable amount of food on the shelves in the grocery stores. So, fuel first and food second. I saw the Water District's turbine is still turning so I'm sure we have water and sewer."

"Generator filters?"

“We need to find a John Deere dealer. I put in a good supply so that’s not pressing and we still have enough oil for several oil changes. I use 15w-40 Castrol.”

“So you practice what you preach?”

“Obviously. The M14 rifle was the finest American Main Battle Rifle ever invented, and you know it.”

“What’s the finest Assault Weapon?”

“The HK416 and HK417; the Extended HK416 with the AG-C/GLM mounted can’t be beat... provided it has a 20” barrel. The HK417 with the accurized barrel is a good medium range sniper rifle.”

“How do we distinguish the good guys from the bad guys?”

“By how they treat the people they’re supposed to be helping. I suppose it’s an individual decision. For example, while they have to maintain order, there’s no sense in them abusing those they’re trying to help. Murphy used to say *‘shoot ‘em all and let God sort ‘em out*. I don’t believe I’m willing to go that far, unless someone really pisses me off.”

“One more question. Why didn’t you get large enough fuel tanks to begin with or lay in a larger supply of groceries?”

“Simple, the lack of time and money. This was a long term project completed over the short term.”

“You could have done much more if you hadn’t bought some of those firearms.”

“Who got my original set?”

“I did.”

“Who is going to get my new set?”

“Me?”

“Probably. I’ll hold out a set for your brother included a Loaded, 590A1 SPX and PT1911. Probably won’t give him any suppressors or select fire weapons, haven’t decided.”

Dream a Little Dream of Me – Chapter 6

“Oh, one more, if you will.”

“What?”

“What’s with the mining?”

“The concept goes back to the first story I wrote, *The Ark*. *The Ark* was an intentional community built south of Colorado Springs. As it grew, the needs of the population exceeded the capacity to acquire the necessities of life in the short term. The easiest solution was recovering the contents of semi-trailer rigs on I-25. We acquired enough to fill 4 warehouses if I remember correctly.

“Looting is taking something from someone and that was out. Scrounging is looking for a handout. Salvaging, also called mining, is recovering abandoned property. Scavenging is going through other peoples’ junk. In order preference, we’ll salvage, scavenge, scrounge and loot. And, before you ask, we won’t be leaving notes telling the source what we took or who we are.”

“So, now what?”

“Lock and load.”

“Bull! *Planning Pays Off*.”

“Jerry wrote a story with that title.”

“And?”

“You’re right. So, son, what’s the plan?”

“One group of 2 looks for tankers. A second group of 2 looks for propane. A third group of everyone leftover gets food. When we have enough fuel for 2-3 years, the fuel people locate more weapons and ammo. After that’s secured, everyone looks for food.”

“The natural priorities are air – 3 minutes; shelter – 3 hours; water – 3 days; and food – 3 weeks.”

“That’s assuming you don’t have a source of power. You do. What you’re lacking is the fuel to continue generating power. Therefore fuel is the highest priority. One tanker of gasoline will be plenty. You really need diesel fuel. The logical place to get diesel fuel is truck stops. Are there any around here?”

“Damned if I know.”

“There are at least 2 in Victorville, 2 in Pearblossom, 1 in Acton, 1 in Boron and 1 in Mojave,” Chris said. “Dave and I can check them out starting in Pearblossom since it’s the closest. After those, we’ll check Acton, the next closest.”

“Before you leave Palmdale, try to locate a 50kw 3 phase generator or two. If necessary, you can power the pumps and load any empty tankers you run across. I wouldn’t mind having at least 48 thousand gallons of diesel and 8 thousand gallons of gasoline. If you find kerosene, get a few drums for our kerosene lamps. AmeriGas on 6th Street East should have at least 2 3,000 gallon delivery trucks. Fill them and bring back here, if possible. Lastly, keep your eyes open for PRI-D and PRI-G. The remainder of us will start going through grocery stores.

“I figure they’ve probably been picked over. Regardless, take any food stuffs you find. If nothing else, take beans, rice, pasta and pasta sauce plus any and every canned meat product you can find. The old survivalists’ joke is and I quote, ‘don’t forget the toilet paper’. Go for Charmin and Northern in the large rolls of the softest paper you find. One of us should get with the women and see if they have any preferences when it comes to feminine hygiene products. If we run across a tractor trailer rig with a box trailer, we can haul a lot of goods in a single trip.

“Finally, at least one member of each group should have a rifle, handgun and shotgun. If you run into trouble, one can use the rifle and the other the shotgun.”

“Questions?”

“How about some smoke, assuming you have some.”

“I have white, violet, red, green and yellow plus quite few M67 fragmentation grenades. Everyone take 3 frags and one of each color of smoke. Violet and white can be used for concealment if you have to move and the green and red to indicate whether you’re under fire or not. Red will indicate a hot LZ.”

“So green means we’re not under fire?”

“Uh duh; what else could it mean?”

“Just checking.”

“Derek is going as a Command Sergeant Major and I’ll wear Captain’s bars.”

“Wouldn’t it be better if he wore the Captain’s bars and you the CSM insignia? He has the most current military training.”

“It’s fine with me; go ahead and suggest it to him,” I said laughing to myself. Derek had turned down a chance at OCS back in 2012 and he hates officers with a passion. Better they should learn that first hand.

“What did he say?”

“I can't repeat it in mixed company.”

“I thought not. I'm not sure what he has against Commission Officers but he hates them with a passion.”

“How about we make the 2 person teams 3 person teams? That would give us 2 drivers and someone riding shotgun.”

“That should work and you can probably get by with a single trip to AmeriGas.”

“Where do you want us to park the vehicles when we come back?”

“Park them at the east end of Moonraker Road. We'll refill the diesel first and top off the propane second.”

“Where do you want us to check for guns and ammo?”

“Start with Santa Fe Gun Galleria. Make your 2nd stop The Gun Shop in Lancaster and be sure to check the upstairs. He keeps his class 3 inventory up there. If you don't find enough at those two places, check High Desert Storm Sporting Goods. They had a name change not that long ago and I don't know if Jeff and Sandy Storm sold out or simply changed the name. Finally, check Big 5 south of Avenue S on 47 Street and in Lancaster.”

Three days later, we had 8,000 gallons of 92 octane gasoline, 56,000 gallons of diesel, the fuel stabilized with PRI products and the propane topped off. The truck they used to top off the propane had been returned to AmeriGas and refilled. In addition, we had a 53' reefer packed to the ceiling with foodstuffs. We also had two additional box trailers, one a 40' and the other a 53'. We had split up and were loading food by the pallet from the loading docks into the trailers.

One team of 3 was collecting weapons and ammo into the smaller box trailer. They had already located 2 50kw 3 phase generators and 5 50kw 1 phase generators, all diesel powered. What they hadn't located was additional propane tanks or diesel/gasoline tanks. The consensus was we'd have everything before the week was out. And, so far, we'd all managed to avoid the California Military Reserve that had set up at the west side high school. That hadn't been hard because they hadn't begun patrols.

We added a Springfield Armory Scout Squad rifle, a Standard model and a Loaded model from Santa Fe plus 6 Kimbers and 2 Browning Hi-Power Classics. We also took all 6 Mini-14s and the 20 round Ruger magazines. Both the Gun Shop and Santa Fe Gun Galleria had full boxes of 20 round 7.62 CMI M14 magazines, 30 round 5.56 CMI magazines and a limited quantity of 7.62x51mm and 5.56x45mm FMJ ammo. The Gun

Shop had 4 select fire HK416s which didn't have the Extended lowers and the barrels were only 16½" but had suppressors. I decided to keep those as 'house guns' along with Scout Squad rifle due to the 18" barrel. I took a Hi-Power as my primary backup and kept the Walther as a secondary backup. The Browning went into Bianchi Model 7 Shadow II Pancake-Style Holster.

We made one final trip scouting for food. We found enough to fill 15' of the 40' box trailer. We did manage to buy 2 bags of onions from a local grower, a market weight Hereford steer and 4 market weight Yorkshire barrows. That gave us enough food for at least 2 and probably 3 years. The only things we'd been able to get from Costco were cigarettes, hams, butter, Crisco, Coke, flour, sugar, rice, pinto beans, Folgers, canned meats and sausage.

Sam's Club provided several cases of pasta and 3 times as many cases of pasta sauce. We also cleaned them out of cigarettes, lighters and matches. Ace Hardware had Diamond strike anywhere matches and fusees.

A week later, the California State Military reserve showed up on our doorstep with a lot of questions. Where did the fuel come from? What was in the box trailers? Did we have additional firearms besides the sidearms that we were wearing? Had we been looting?

"The fuel came from Chevron, Texaco and AmeriGas. The box trailers contained salvaged abandoned goods. Yes, we had a few additional firearms. And, no, we hadn't been looting; it was strictly salvaged abandoned property."

"Show us what's in the trucks."

"Certainly; may I see your search warrant?"

"We don't have one but that shouldn't take long."

"Come back when you have it."

"You stay here until we get back!"

"Ok."

It took about 3 hours for them to return with the search warrant.

"Where are the tankers and trailers?"

"I honestly don't know. You told me to wait here and that's exactly what I've been doing. I didn't move any of those things since I don't know how to drive a semi-tractor."

"What's the handgun in the paddle holster?"

“A Browning Hi-Power.”

“How about the shoulder holster?”

“That’s a 1911.”

“Do you have any other firearms?”

“Yes; I have a Mossberg 590A1 SPX.”

“No rifles?”

“Yes, I have a Springfield Armory M21 with 5 and 10 round magazines.”

“Were you aware that the President ordered the seizure of firearms?”

“No he didn’t. His exact words were, *In conjunction with this declaration, sales of firearms, ammunition and accessories are suspended until the state of martial law is lifted. Orders have been issued that looters will be shot on sight.* None of our firearms were purchased after that announcement.”

“I’ll have to collect your firearms.”

“I’m afraid that’s not possible.”

“Why not?”

“Look around you.”

The Sergeant and 3 other soldiers were surrounded and everyone had a suppressed long arm.

“AR-15s?”

“Select fire HK416s.”

“Select fire firearms are illegal in the state of California.”

“No chit. So are M1As, Taurus PT1911s and several other arms we have on hand.”

“We’ll be back.”

“Bad decision Arnold, we’ll be waiting.”

“Arnold?”

“Schwarzenegger; you know, the guy that always says ‘I’ll be back’ in his movies.”

“You wouldn’t dare!”

“Try us.”

“We have bigger fish to fry.”

“What fish; a Megalodon?”

“How many of you are there?”

“More than you can see at the moment, I assure you.”

“Count on this. If I hear of any activity that I can directly relate to your group, we will be back in Company strength.”

“You only have a Platoon Lieutenant; where are you going to get the other troops? And, you obviously didn’t notice these Captain’s bars. Of course my Command Sergeant Major will probably be in charge of dealing with your small group.”

“You really have a CSM?”

“Yep and he has over 20 between his active duty and National Guard service. He’s been to Korea, Kosovo, Iraq and the Ukraine. Where have you been?”

“Kosovo.”

“And, you’re still a Lieutenant? Shame, shame.”

They left and not long after they left, the trailers and tankers returned to the housing tract. Chris and Dave took off looking for an empty box trailer to put across the front entrance. They didn’t find an empty. The one they found was loaded with PV panels, inverters and submarine batteries. There were enough batteries for a single 48 volt bank for 5 houses and enough inverters to provide 30kw per house. The batteries were dry, but the acid was included in separate containers. The PV panels were 300 watt and there were 32 pallets of them packed 20 per pallet. There were also 19” relay racks to hold the inverters and charge controllers.

We unloaded the PV panels while Chris and Dave went looking for a pallet jack and a forklift. The forklift was propane powered and we had no shortage of propane. After some discussion, it was decided to put the battery banks and inverters in the garages and mount the PV panels on the south facing roofs. Dick didn’t have a south facing roof but the Klein house did and he decided to move from his house to the empty house, after he had power.

We did the Klein house first and Dave helped him move to his new home. Meanwhile the rest of us were installing PV panels as fast as we could. Derek and Mary took the house between Chris and Patty and us. We had the panels all mounted within another 8 days. The batteries were wired in series to produce 52.8 volts and they were connected to the 8kw inverters producing in excess of 100 amps of 240vac. Since we didn't have an ATS, the inverter output was wired directly to the service panels using 0000 cables.

Once we were done, Dick and Dave located 2 Troy-bilt rototillers and we began the battle of converting the densely packed sand into soil. Dick's garden went into the large open space between his former residence and his current residence. The space was large enough for Chris and Patti to share that garden space. Dave had the largest garden space amongst the 5 families and he tilled it all and planted the crops requiring the most space, like corn.

After breaking up the sand, we salvaged bagged manure from several garden shops including Wal-Mart and Lowes. We took all of the Gardeners 1ft³ Gardener's Steer Manure and Gardeners 1ft³ Chicken Manure we could find plus a truckload of Scott's fertilizer. The manure was incorporated in with a second perpendicular pass and a product to increase water retention was added. Next, we planted 2x2s to support the garden netting we'd found. That left us with a single chore, locating pressure canners, jars and lids. Planting the gardens would come later.

Adding the manure proved to be our best idea since it converted the nutrient rich sand to something approaching loam. We went back and collected the remaining bagged manure to use the following year. The search for pressure canners, Mason jars and lids was less successful. We located 30 quart All American pressure canners, 16 in all. We did slightly less better on canning lids. The thing we were shortest on was pints and quarts.

I took a chance and called Canning Pantry and I'll be damned if I didn't get through. I told the lady that I was shopping for 5 families and we needed a gross of cases of regular mouth pints and two gross of cases of regular mouth quarts. It would have to be COD since I didn't trust the mail to get a check to them. I also told her I wanted Mrs. Wages tomato mixes and pickle mixes. She got my name and address and said they'd send the semis as soon as they were loaded.

With that bit of luck, I decided to go for broke and called Tattler to discuss their bulk packed lids and rings. Again, it would have to be COD. I placed an order for 6,000 rings and lids with an order for 1,000 spare rings, all regular mouth.

The Tattle order arrived before the Canning Pantry and I had cash in hand to pay for the order. A few days later The Canning Pantry order showed up and we put the forklift to good use, stacking the pallets on the patio.

A discussion arose over how we were going to do the canning and I suggested putting 2 propane stoves on the patio near the water faucet but only because the Palmdale Water District had the water and sewer up. Dick said he had several sets of jets to convert the natural gas stoves to propane so we moved our stove outside next to the stove that was already there. He converted them in no time at all. What we were now missing was a preparation area so we cobbled together a work counter with a sink and a 5 gallon bucket to catch the water from the sink. The water would be used to water the garden.

The next house over, the one occupied by Mary and Derek, seemed to be doing much better than any of the other gardens and I was curious why. Derek asked me if there was anything unusual about the property and I told him the Joe had incorporated a pickup load of manure years earlier and that the leech field for our septic tank was on his side of the wall. He said the leech field probably accounted for the richness of the soil more than the manure that had gone in 20 years before.

I noticed he had supers and was producing honey.

“Where did you get the bees?”

“Bought them from a guy down the road about five miles.”

“Littlerock?”

“Yeah. I also got 4 supers and with all the gardens we have going, we should get a fair amount of honey.”

“I forgot that you and you Grandpa Spencer had a good honey business going. Didn’t you tell me your share ran as much as a thousand dollars some years?”

“My share our best year did go around a grand. That was big money 40 odd years ago.”

“That’s good money even in these times. What did you plant this year?”

“Assorted melons, assorted potatoes and 3 kinds of onions. Now that I know more about the ground, I may plant rice next year.”

“I doubt that will pay off and we don’t have a shortage of beans or rice. What kinds of melons?”

“Watermelon, Cantaloupe, Honeydew, butternut, acorn and spaghetti. White, brown and red onions. Yukon gold, Russet and Kennebec potatoes.”

“Three of those melons you listed are squash.”

“True, but they are similar in appearance to the three melons I mentioned. It looks like we’re going to have a good crop.”

“That’s good, but we don’t have a fruit cellar.”

“Can’t we put one under the patio slab like you did with the armory?”

“Probably. Know anything about laying block?”

“You get the block and mortar and I’ll figure it out.”

“We’re going to need two posts and I-beams too. Plus the support poles in the armory are on concrete pads.”

“So, get some Quikrete. Two sacks should be plenty.”

“I think they used 2 sacks per pad. I’ll get 4 sacks.”

We undermined another 200ft² under the patio slab and had our fruit cellar. It came just in time as the produce from all four gardens was picked, prepared and canned. The filled jars went back into the cases they’d come from and were stacked until we could erect shelving. The shelves were spaced to allow 2 cases, one stacked above the other three cases wide. The pint shelving was the same only smaller in the vertical dimension.

By the time the last items were harvested and stored, the shelves were filled nearly to overflowing. Our trips to the grocery stores were equally rewarding. We’d cleaned the patio under the solid cover and stacked most of those goods there. Additionally, we cleaned out the garage emptying the expired food in the process. Our bread flour was buggy as were the large sacks of popcorn and the pinto beans wouldn’t soften after soaking them overnight and cooking them in a pressure cooker.

After we finished cleaning the garage out and discarding over 1/3 of the contents, we moved a large portion of the food from a trailer into the garage. Given the volume of melons, squash, onions and potatoes Derek and Mary had produced they also ended up in the garage.

I’d written in some of my stories about extending the fence from the block walls to the sidewalk, across the front and back to the eastern block wall. Since we had a good handle on laying blocks we started on that project. Chris welded up the wrought iron fence sections and Derek and I laid the block. Well, that’s only partial correct, I hauled block and mixed the mortar while Derek laid the block. Liked to kill me.

When we finished with the block and had the wrought iron sections installed, that still left us with the sidewalk gate and the driveway gate to install. Chris had the sidewalk gate completed by then and Derek and I installed that. I wanted the driveway gate to roll to the east, even if it temporarily blocked the sidewalk gate. It just fit and Chris had fashioned wheels mounted in sections of angle iron welded together for the wheels to run in. In a like manner, he fabricated an upper trough that the top of the gate ran in. There

was about $\frac{3}{8}$ " clearance. The gate was strictly a manual affair. It had to be unlocked and slid to the east to allow access to the driveway.

One activity had remained unchanged, monthly firearms practice. We used up the surplus on practice preserving the match grade ammo for when the need arose to use it. It was getting late in the year and we hadn't seen hide nor hair of the California Military Reserve back in the tract. All things come to an end eventually and on the night of November 15th we were invaded.

I'm sure they must have scouted us for some time since they were able to climb the block walls and enter unnoticed by the 2 person patrol that circled the tract. Had they been slightly more careful, they might have pulled it off. Unfortunately for them, we had evolved a system that provided us with ample warning. The patrol reported in at every corner and when they failed to call in, Derek tripped the klaxon. It was an old piece of military surplus but it worked and it was very loud. The ohga, ohga had everyone awake in moments and each group took its assigned station.

The moonless night worked well for the invaders, right up to the point that they realized we had several rifles equipped with night vision and improved flashhiders. The tract is small and it took little time to eliminate a large portion of their force. When the remaining members tried to flee, they were cut down without mercy. Fifteen minutes later, we were loading the bodies into Dick's and Dave's trucks. It was the full Platoon. They would meet an inglorious end at the bottom of the proverbial mine shaft. We collected their equipment and it went into the armory. Their vehicles were parked in the parking lot of the National Guard Armory.

The Tac-50s had MUNS and the M21s had UNS and the remainder of the rifles plus the extra M1As we'd picked up had whatever we could find, mostly ATN sold by various outlets like Big 5 and Turner Outdoorsman. Mostly 2nd generation if we were lucky, with some 1st generation thrown in for good measure. The Mossberg shotguns had been modified with Surefire LED flashlight fore-end and they were aligned to point of aim. The lights were focused to provide the smallest circle of light at 50 yards.

Do you know what the California Military Reserve had for firearms? Para Ordnance P-14s and HK416s. These were the 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ " barrels with red dot sights, but, they were suppressed. Naturally, the best night vision went on the M1A rifles and the next best on the HK417 rifles. The HK416s ended up with red dot sights and a Surefire flashlight.

Mr. crossed fingers refused to keep any firearms at their residence. Even when I offered cable locks and trigger guards, the fingers remained crossed. Native Californian Liberal! I mean crap; the radiation didn't really get all that high and we weren't in the shelter very long. He seemed to take a dim view of strategic reallocation unless it was Nitromethane for his race car.

We didn't have to deal with EMP because there was a mountain range between us and the storage facility in Los Angeles. But the radiation was carried aloft and sifted out giv-

ing us a reasonable share. While we were in the shelter, I brought up NwFaq and studied up on the subject of Nuclear Warfare, Fallout and everything related. I'd previously figured out that you had to wait an hour if you were within range of prompt radiation, ergo, blast radiation. It took an hour for prompt radiation to become ineffective giving you the figure I'd always used, 3,000R/hr at ground zero.

Those of us that voted Republican knew we were doomed when Obama was elected in 2008. We didn't know about the backroom deal between Clinton and Obama in 2012; that came out during 2013. A few of were speculating that Obama would find some reason to declare a National Emergency during 2016 and cancel the elections. He didn't need to drum up anything; the country that planted the bombs had given him his excuse on a silver platter. The real question was: *was he trying to find out who'd done it?* At this point in time, we didn't know it had been North Korea because we hadn't talked to that Ham yet.

It was here that the events took a turn for the better...

Dream a Little Dream of Me – Chapter 7

*We gotta get out of this place
If it's the last thing we ever do
We gotta get out of this place
'cause girl, there's a better life for me and you*

“We’re leaving.”

“Just like that?”

“Yeah, we gotta get outta this place and back home.”

“The Animals, 1965.”

“*China Beach.*”

“Dana Delany wasn’t hard on the eyes.”

“True, but they used the song on the series.”

“I was lookin’ not listenin’.”

“Regardless, I have to get back to school. How about we line up some semis and 53’ trailers and haul everything to Arkansas?”

“Get extra semis to pull the tankers. We’ll need an escort. Know where you can get 4 or 5 Hummers?”

“M1114? One Mk 19, 2 Ma Deuces and 2 M240Bs?”

“CROWS?”

“If we get lucky, they’re Army only.”

“Try Camp Roberts. Camp Roberts is a California National Guard post in central California, located on both sides of the Salinas River in Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties, now run by the California Army National Guard. Nearby communities include San Miguel, Heritage Ranch (Lake Nacimiento), Oak Shores (Lake Nacimiento), and Bradley, all unincorporated. The nearest incorporated city is Paso Robles. Camp Roberts is adjacent to Fort Hunter Liggett. Take I-5 to CA 46 and take that West to Paso Robles. When you get there pickup 101 North to Camp Roberts.

“Since the Guard and the California State Military Reserve are deployed, there shouldn’t be many troops at the Camp. Get the 5 Hummers, munitions and fuel trailers they can tow. We’ll take the empty tanker and refill if at Plant 42 with Jet A while you’re on the

road. We'll empty the shelter and sort through the trailers we have and put together a good supply of food."

"How many tankers?"

"One double tanker of Jet A, one of no. 2 diesel and one of propane; we'll load the drums of gasoline and kerosene in one of the box trailers or on a flatbed."

"Use a flatbed. Can you pull the propane tanks and mount them on the flatbed too?"

"Bring everything?"

"If it's nailed down, pull the nails."

"Gotcha."

We filled twin 9,000 gallon tankers with Jet A, got twin 9,000 gallon propane tankers and twin 9,000 gallon diesel tankers along with a single 9,000 gallon gasoline tanker filled with premium. All the fuels needing stabilizers contained PRI products and extra stabilizers were loaded on the flatbed which had 2 of the 3,300 gallon propane tanks, filled. It also had the generator, Safe Cells, inverters and batteries.

I borrowed an old 3 passenger Dodge Ram 3500 with a Cummins 6BT engine, 5 speed manual transmission and manual transfer case. I had Chris go through it from top to bottom. We added a topper to provide secure storage for the firearms and a portion of the ammunition, the expensive stuff. There was extra space behind the seat which was used to store one set of firearms. The included the Tac-50, M21, Mossberg, HK416 with and HK417 without. The PT1911 was in my Monarch shoulder holster, the Hi-Power in a paddle holster and the Walther in an IWB holster. There were 6 spare mags for the Taurus and 4 extra for the Hi-Power and 2 extra for the PPK.

Derek et al. were gone longer than we anticipated. When they finally showed up, they had the 5 M1114s, 5 fuel trailers, the five CROWS II with the agreed upon weapons. They also had a pair of 8x8 HEMTTs with containers on the bed and pulling a trailer with a second container.

"What..."

"Munitions, spare parts, extra head spaced barrels for the M240Bs, extra M2A1 barrels, etc. Picked up some of those H&K rifles, too, 4 HK416s with AG-C/GLMs and 8 HK417s without but full sets of barrels and hardware for all 14. We also picked up magazines, ACOGs, optics, and a whole lot of things that go boom."

"Its shame the Army doesn't use Tac-50s."

"We got multiple cases of M107 ammo that will work well in the 2 Tac-50s. Did they hit Phoenix?"

"Nope."

"There you go. It's shame Damon isn't here, he's the expert scrounger."

"We'd be lucky if they had 2 Tac-50s on hand. We could pick up some of those M3A stocks and stop by Geneseo on the way and get more of the SA9102 actions and more 20 round magazines. You know a good gunsmith that could glass bed the actions?"

"Yep."

"That would get Mary and you your own M21s. Plus we can drive by Palm Springs."

"Ever been there?"

"Nope. Stopped to eat a few times though at In and Out."

"That had to be 2000 or earlier."

"It was. On the last trip we picked up the Sauer 38H and the .22."

"You know the SA9102 rifles are glass bedded in oversized walnut stocks."

"Given the humidity in Lake City, we definitely need to restock the rifles. So... what does that make the count on the HKs, ten of each?"

"Yes but 24 of each would be better."

"You have any money left?"

"Nope."

"Didn't think so. We'll keep an eye open for more and we need drivers. Do you know any?"

"Nope. Well, I know one but he's ineligible. It's that guy that remodeled the kitchen and I wasn't the only one who fooled around."

"How many do we need?"

"Four tanker drivers, 2 53'-cargo semi drivers plus however many you need for the Hummers and HEMTTs."

"Mary can drive a semi if there is room to load our vehicle on the flatbed."

“There’s room, but it will be a tight fit. Say, it just occurred to me, can we get 4 HETS and 4 M1A3s?”

“Might have a problem getting crews.”

“You think everyone at Fort Hood likes Obama?”

“That would mean taking I-10 to San Antonio where we’d pick up I-35 to Benton and that to Killeen and Fort Hood. We might as well get 8 Abrams, 8 Bradleys, 8 AH-64 Apache Longbows, 4 Kiowa Warriors plus HETS to haul everything... They would all be elements of a single Brigade.”

“Congratulations on your promotion to O-6.”

“Bull Shit!!!”

“Think about it... you’re the only one who could pull it off. We could make Mary an E-7, E-8 or E-9.”

“What about you?”

“Recalled E-7?”

“Sharon?”

“My wife.”

“Okay, but we’ll make both you and Mary E-8s. That’s what we have the most subdued rank insignia of.”

“I have Air Force subdued E-7, Master Sergeant. I could be an attached, recalled Air Force E-7.”

“Why?”

“It would explain why I don’t know much about the Army and my age.”

“You’re too old to have been recalled.”

“I volunteered?”

“Reserves, perhaps? You volunteered and I felt sorry for you and made you an active reservist because you’re a good shot.”

“I’m not that good.”

“But you have the weapons and no one will challenge the claim.”

“The consequences of wanting very good firearms?”

“Yep... pay the piper.”

“A point of information. When I suggested that we be Special Ops personnel, I had the weapons in mind. Who but Special Ops would have something like an HK416 Extended or a non-standard M21? Who but the government can afford and is allowed to buy something like the AN/PVS-27 MUNS?”

“At the very least, we’d need the Combat Infantryman Badge, Master Parachutist Badge, Ranger Tab and Special Forces Tab for the uniforms. I will not wear any insignia that I haven’t earned.”

“Except, perhaps, the O-6 insignia?”

“I haven’t agreed to that.”

“You’re retired, what difference does it make?”

“If I have to explain, you wouldn’t understand.”

“Ethics, huh? I used to have the same problem... until I moved to California. I had to learn to go with the flow and adopt situational ethics. I don’t like it but when one considers what California turned into, what choice does one have?”

“A little white lie?”

“Maybe not so little but very necessary.”

“My ID card says I’m an E-7.”

“Field promotions and your new ID Card never caught up to you because you were constantly on the move?”

“Do you have any idea what it takes to get a new ID card?”

“Explain it to me.”

“You get a new card at the ID card shop which is at least secured 3 layers deep. The DoD has the card shops run by civilian employees. It only takes 10 minutes start to finish... but that DoD employee has to have access to a computer database which includes, among other things, the updated rank information. Impossible... can’t be done.”

“Then what was the holdup getting your retired ID Card?”

“I got that. The holdup was driving over Fort Chafee and picking it up.”

“You didn’t tell me that.”

“It was embarrassing.”

“So, you’re going home?”

“Yep. We’ll swap out the weapons and take just what we brought with us.”

“You don’t want a Tac-50, M21, HK416 Extended or HK417?”

“Now, I didn’t say that. The price is too high.”

“What price is that?”

“Revolution or Civil War, call it whatever you want.”

“Your oath was to support and defend the Constitution and it doesn’t have an expiration date. Correct me if I’m wrong, the best location to arm up is Foot Hood.”

“Give it a rest; I’ll consider it.”

“If you decide to honor your oath, what will you need?”

“We’ll need more of the Heckler and Koch rifles and a lot more ordnance and matériel.”

“M1911 pattern handguns in .45ACP ok?”

“I suppose.”

I called Phoenix.

“You want HOW MANY?”

“Four hundred HK416, half or more equipped with H&K AG-C/GLM. We picked up some extra 416s and 417s but need full hardware sets, they all had the 16½” barrels. We also need 48 additional HK417s with all configurations. That will include Nightforce NXS 3.5-15x50mm scopes, 25 magazines for each rifle and suppressors for the HK417s.

“I’ll swap those out of the non-standard units. How you going to pay for this?”

“I don’t have a clue. We’re tapped out.”

“You going to war?”

“Possibly. Say, were you in the service?”

“Uncle Sam’s Misguide Children, ten years.”

“When did your enlistment oath expire?”

“About 15 years ago.”

“Look it up, the Oath of Enlistment never expires.”

“And that’s your bargaining chip?”

“It’s all I have, plus a genuine US Army Requisition.”

“Say I could do it, what then?”

“We’ll convoy in and pick it up.”

“When?”

“How long will it take?”

“Not long, I just need to make a trip to Camp Navajo.”

“I’m not going to suggest you clean them out... but every little bit helps.”

“It will all be on HEMTTs in a 20’ Conex pulling a trailer with another 20’ Conex.”

“Anyone in Phoenix carry submarine batteries?”

“Several places. How many to you need?”

“One hundred forty-four up to one hundred sixty-eight and enough inverters to produce 200 Kilowatts.”

“How are you going to charge them?”

“We’ll pick up solar panels in Albuquerque, New Mexico.”

“Where are you headed?”

“Fort Hood.”

“Killeen, Texas?”

“That’s the place.”

“What are you getting there?”

“Eight M1A3 Abrams with 20 reloads, eight M2 Bradleys with the same number of reloads and eight AH-64Ds with 30 reloads plus 4 Kiowa Warriors to observe for the Longbows.”

“You have crews?”

“We’ll borrow what we need.”

“Need ammo for the rifles?”

“Yeah, M855A1, M995 and any sniper grade 5.56. We’ll need 168gr match for the HK417s. Don’t know why they built those barrels with 1 turn in 11. Other than that, assorted hand grenades, 40mm grenades for the rifles plus combat belted .50BMG, 40mm belted for the Mk19s and belted 7.62 for the Mike 240 Bravos.”

“M2A1 okay on the .50s?”

“Yeah, if you can get enough headspaced barrels. How about the Tech Manual and tools to headspace the M2A1 and Mike 240 Bravos?”

“No M249s?”

“Nope. Wouldn’t mind a couple hundred M27 Infantry Automatic Rifles.”

“How many people are you equipping?”

“A Brigade.”

“Are you sure you’re not forgetting something?”

“Now that you mention it, 48 Springfield Armory Super Match with the Douglas parkerized barrels mounted in McMillan M3A ladder stocks with Harris bipods, SA leather slings, Sadlak mounts, Nightforce NXS 3.5-15x50mm Tactical Illuminated Reticle Rifle-scope-Mil-Dot using A.R.M.S. throw lever rings and Surefire suppressors. Oh, AN/PVS-22 UNS on the M21s and the HK417s. If you can pick up 3 Tac-50s, complete and 5 Tac-338 Lapuas complete, we can use them.”

“I hope they have enough HEMTTs and trailers.”

“Keep your eyes peeled for half a dozen double tankers, preferably diesel tankers. If you find them, get the ANG to fill them with JP8.”

“You sure you don’t want some Minuteman IIs or Trident C4s?”

“Thank you no.”

“I’ll need a full week.”

“Where do you want to meet?”

“Flagstaff?”

“Ok, meet you at that big truckstop east of town with a parking lot full of military vehicles. How about 2 AN/TWQ-1 Avengers, with reloads?”

“My list is full, get the rest at Fort Hood.”

“Gotcha.”

I faxed him the requisitions that Derek guaranteed would fly. Must have worked, the convoy we were meeting was triple the size of ours. Here’s where it got interesting rather than complete the H&K rifles, he took what we had and gave us new replacements. He even had Arizona National Guardsmen driving the vehicles.

“I forgot something.”

“Pistols and spare magazines?”

“Yep.”

“We picked up 500 USP Tacticals in .45ACP with 9 magazines each and those Ripoff double magazine pouches. With.”

“What’s the deal, you work for the CIA?”

“Department of Homeland Security.”

“The DHI?”

“Huh?”

“Do they make you feel very secure?”

“Point taken; actually we just rerouted the shipments. And we greased the skids at Fort Hood so you shouldn’t run into trouble. Used an Executive Order marked Above Top Secret. Don’t ask...”

“Thanks, it’s been a pleasure.”

“Oh, just so you know, every bit of the equipment, ordnance and other matériel was paid for using White House slush funds.”

“You gotta be chitting me!”

“Gospel. Where are you headed after Fort Hood?”

“Fort Chaffee.”

“Out of the frying pan into the fire?”

“Meeting up with the 142nd Fires Brigade. That will give us artillery and counter fire capability.”

“Good luck.”

“Thanks, we’ll need it.”

Dream a Little Dream of Me – Chapter 8

After the stop in Albuquerque, at SCHOTT Solar North America where we picked up all the PV panels they had in stock, we headed for Killeen, Texas. My strawman wasn't kidding when he said the skids were greased. They had 8 Abrams and 8 Bradleys strapped down on HETS and 4 HEMTTs with trailers full of reloads and spare parts. They were two busloads of ground support personnel, the 8 AH-64D Longbows and 4 Kiowa Warriors. A 5th HEMTT had personal gear, food and a Battalion Aid Station and the trailer with the extra equipment for the Aid Station plus a mess unit. A tanker with fuel was dispatched as soon as the drivers were given the destination to be ready to re-fuel and service the 10 choppers.

Derek was wearing his E-7 insignia and I was stuck wearing the Captain's bars. Everyone was run through the ID Shop and issued current active duty ID Cards. I was asked when I last served and told them 27May65 as an E-4. Once everyone had ID Cards, a light bird swore us in for the duration plus 6 months. That could be the shortest tour of duty or the longest, depending on how things worked out.

Two days later, we pulled into Fort Chaffee and Derek was immediately called into the Commander's office. He wasn't smiling when he returned with his new rank insignia and new ID Card... they promoted him to Brevet Major. My rank was assumed and his was a temporary rank. His new permanent rank was Sergeant Major and he and Mary were actually recalled to active duty. She took the permanent rank of Sergeant First Class (E-7). When I asked about it, he told me I had been recalled to a permanent rank of Technical Sergeant (E-6) and a Brevet Captain.

Furthermore, if I could shoot as well as I claimed, I'd become a permanent Master Sergeant (E-7), but remain a Brevet Captain. Finally he explained that our pay would be based on our permanent rank, not the Brevet rank. I wonder aloud how it would affect my Social Security and he assured me it wouldn't.

And... this all came about because I was a gun nut. The aid station did a laser treatment on my eyes clearing them and issuing me glasses to correct the vision in my right eye from 20/25 to 20/20. The left eye was 20/20 so no correction was needed. Then, they started a minor physical conditioning program so I could haul the Tac-50 and I began spending afternoons on the range. Thirty days later, I made Master Sergeant and could walk a mile without getting winded. The sit-ups, pushups and other exercises were lost causes. I was informed that if I could complete a 2½ mile walk in 20 minutes carrying my firearms, they'd give me a pass on the sit-ups and pushups.

So, I kept at it with the walking and eventually got 'close enough'. All kitted up, my load approached 40 pounds and I only weighted 136. The weight loss had begun back in 2013 when I had a hypoglycemic event and fell. I went from 146 to 141 in 10 days. After, I continued to lose weight at a much slower pace. I began to believe that my sins of the past were catching up with me. My hemoglobin A1C got into the mid-6s and my

blood pressure went from 150/65 to 105/45. I couldn't explain it, I was simply running down.

With my luck I'd really end up a 97 pound weakling. But my legs began to replace the lost muscle mass so something was actually working. Plus my 25 cigarette a day habit was down to ~10 cigarettes a day. Unfortunately that didn't eliminate the hack that came when the fall irritated my chronic bronchitis... even when I used Albuterol and Atrovent, QID.

On the other hand, my marksmanship was slowly improving and I shoot 1MOA at 900 meters with the M21 and less than 1MOA at 1,800 meters with that damned heavy Tac-50. Of all the handguns I tried, my shooting was at its peak with the PT1911, Browning Hi-Power and .380 PPK. I liked the USP Tactical although it was designed to fit someone else's hand. The 590A1 kicked me halfway to Sunday but I said so-be-it, I wasn't changing ammo. The Brenneke 3" Black Magic slugs were hard to find and double the price of the Remington Slugger; the Remington 15 pellet 00 buck was cheaper but still hard to find.

I used them only because they produced the sniper's desired result of one shot, one kill. With the ghost ring sights, a 100 meter shot with the 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ oz slug put 'em down and well-aimed shot 00 buck was a sure kill at 50 meters. Plus the padded shooting jacket kept me from getting kicked on my butt. I didn't rest on my laurels either and stayed in practice with the HK416 and grenade launcher plus the HK417 with the 168gr match ammo. One had to give it to the Germans; they put together one hell of a package. Plus both rifles were lighter than the M21 and Tac-50.

Pushing 73, I was, generally speaking, slower than molasses in January in northern Canada. Sharon made sure I ate right, even when I didn't feel like eating. Somewhere, the ANG came up with the medicines we took... I suspected the Strategic National Stockpile. We were fortunate that we had been Kaiser Patients because Kaiser prescribed generic drugs 95+% of the time. The simple exercise routine also went a long ways towards a partial natural remedy for my diabetes. The same applied, although to a lesser extent, to the reduced smoking and my COPD. They even had me on the annual injections to reduce my osteoporosis.

The heavy rifles stopped gaining weight; or, was I just carrying less ammo? Nope, same amount of ammo... I just wasn't lugging it with me... God Bless golf carts. I still carried 1,125 rounds of 7.62 NATO or 11 magazines .50 BMG plus 21 30-round magazines of 5.56 NATO and 12 40mm grenades. Add to that 3 M67, 1 each Thermate and Flash-bang plus 5 smoke grenades, one of each color.

When we'd moved out and left those native Californians to their own devices, we didn't leave much behind. We'd moved everything not bolted down and unbolted some of the other things and put them on flatbeds. We gathered much more on the way to Fort Chaffee, as I pointed out.

Mary and Derek had been home to Lake City and gathered their personal possessions, hauling them back to Fort Chaffee in a 20' Conex on a HEMTT. When I was in the Air Force, last century, they called the housing area Wherry Housing. I once checked Wiki and searched for 'Wherry Housing'. Wiki routed me right to Edwards, CA. So, I looked up EAFB and found a picture of where I used to work.



The story I told about watching them fire an F-8 engine occurred right there. The engine was on the stand on the far left of the picture. The test stand where we were has since been removed. It was about halfway between that stand and the stand to the left of the US flag.

But, back on subject... all this time at Fort Chaffee and I had never been on a mission. Others had... and there'd been hell to pay. The other side lost more than our side but the other side was much larger. Our side was about 3 Battalions, maybe 4. Their side had about $\frac{5}{8}$ of the remaining active duty military and $\frac{1}{3}$ of the National Guard. Those units not on their side or our side were mostly like us, individual Brigades doing their own thing.

"We have a mission."

"Huh? Repeat that."

"We have a mission."

"There for a minute I thought I heard you say *we have a mission.*"

"I did."

"Who's on first?"

"What's on second. You're too skinny now to be Lou Costello. You heard right, we have a mission."

"I get to guard the Hummer?"

"God, I hope not, you've got my back."

"Short or long range?"

"Yep."

"Look at me! What do you see?"

"A tired old man with longer forehead."

"The Tac-50 is long range and goes about 40 pounds with ammo not counting the HK416 with grenades and magazines. We're talking about 50 pounds when it's all said and done. The M21 is sort of medium range at 900 meters but I need my golf cart to haul the ammo. You said *yep*. Am I to infer that you expect me to carry all 3 weapons?"

"Don't forget your PT1911B."

"Four weapons???"

"With ammo, your usual assortment of hand grenades and 2 LAW rockets."

"Don't need LAW rockets. They're short range weapons, 200 meters for a stationary target and 165 meters for a moving target."

"Good memory. Who said all the targets were long range? I said *yep* meaning short and long range."

"Define long range."

"Eighteen-hundred meters."

"Define short range."

“Don’t forget your Mossberg.”

“Fifty meters?”

“Like I said, don’t forget your PT1911B.”

“Crap.”

“But, we’ll haul your golf cart to about 2 kicks out.”

“Where will you be?”

“In front of you.”

“Are you wearing the gold oak leaf or 8 stripes?”

“Eight stripes; they’re going to take back most of the Brevet promotions. If I were you, I’d be looking for a set of Senior Airman stripes.”

“Good, I don’t like the new Master Sergeant insignia. What was wrong with 3 up and 3 rockers? Hell I was still in the inactive reserves when that happened in ‘67. Christ on a crutch, they improve things until nothing works!”

“H&K fixed that.”

“Can you believe it? I thought the military was going to stick with M16/M4 until they got all our soldiers killed.”

“I think they started thinking differently when DEVGRU took out Osama bin Laden using HK416s.”

“But they didn’t start to implement it until after you retired.”

“They couldn’t until they had Sequestration and Obamacare resolved. The House impeached him but the Senate only did a show trial and found him innocent of any wrong doing.”

“I think the real question was whether or not he could be accused of any right doing.”

“You haven’t changed one bit. We leave at 0430 tomorrow so be ready by 0400. You should probably pack your golf cart tonight.”

“You should get a life.”

“What was that Master Sergeant Ott?”

“Yes Sergeant Major.”

“I thought so.”

No, I didn't cave in nor did I kowtow to my son. The opry ain't over until the fat lady sings, or did you forget? He had 6"+ and 50+ pounds on me. He's also 31 years younger and can pass all parts of the Army Fitness Test. Saying I can walk 2½ miles in 20 minutes is really stretching the truth... I said close. That means they could see me from the finish line at 20 minutes not that I'd reached it. Would I openly oppose him? I would if the issue were important enough. Remember, the furthest away from the mainland USA I was during '64, TDY to OLF San Nicolas Island which happens to be part of Ventura County. I managed to screw up there as badly as I did everywhere I was stationed during the 4 years I was in the Air Force. I really should have gone to ISU and studied Electrical Engineering like my father wanted. I could have still disliked him, you know.

I have no doubt he disliked me and was 'disappointed' in me. He made that very plain one time when he and Gayle visited. He and I went to my office for a brief conversation and he made a single statement that covered exactly how he felt. Gayle noticed the look on my face when we returned to the kitchen and within 24 hours he was on the phone apologizing for what he said. One can apologize for saying something... but, they can never take the words back or the feelings that the words generated. I've reminded Derek that payback is a bitch... I think he forgot. I may have to remind him.

Maybe I've said it before, but who we are at any given time is the sum of our experiences... good, bad and otherwise. It also includes a healthy dose of our personal self-esteem. Bad experiences and low self-esteem is as bad as it can get. Hey, there's always your next lifetime to try and get it 'right' (Shirley MacLaine, *Out on a Limb*, 1983).

The coffee pot was set up to start brewing at 0330 to give me time to take a quick shower (17 minutes), get dressed (3-4 minutes), and grab 2 slices of toast, a cup of coffee and down some Grape Nuts with Almond Silk. Plus one final stop in the bathroom. I had learned that the best laxative was 2 cigarettes and I had the first one going before I got out of bed. I was late and didn't make the 0400 turn out, arriving at 0405.

Since I'd cut back the smoking, the first smoke was the one I woke up to with one after each meal, leaving me 2 for the time between breakfast and lunch, 2 between lunch and supper and the last 2 between supper and bedtime. It should be obvious that it amounts to 1 before breakfast and 3 between breakfast and lunch, 3 between lunch and supper and 3 between supper and bedtime. It just sounded better using the first explanation.

My golf cart was loaded on an equipment trailer behind an Avenger type Hummer. I checked my weapons, ammo load out and other ordnance. I noted extra 40mm grenades and about 25 extra hand grenades... more short range weapons. Since I had the

Mossberg, I'd also packed the HK417 and mounted Sharon's AG-C/GLM to the HK417. There was a full canister of M433 grenades in bandoleers.

I left the 2 UNS and 1 MUNS mounted, planning on removing them after sunup. If necessary, I could switch an UNS to the HK416. The armorer has removed the lower receiver from the HK417 and installed an Extended S-1-3-A lower, somehow. I hadn't checked to see if the lowers were interchangeable... they were close. I drew a 4th UNS for the HK416. After all, the 142nd Fires Brigade was picking up the tab and snipers got first choice.

This wasn't like Basic Training at Lackland AFB back in '61 where we spent hours balancing dimes on carbine barrels, learning to pull the trigger without displacing the dime. We got to shoot the M1 carbines twice, once for familiarization and a second time for qualification. I think I qualified as a sharpshooter.

Three years later when we re-qualified, I failed to qualify and had to shoot a second time, barely qualifying as a marksman. For punishment, we had to field strip and clean the carbines, after someone showed us how. I still don't know how to field strip an M1 Carbine. I can field strip and clean each firearm in our current armory, proving you can teach an old dog new tricks.

For all my talk about how great the M1A rifle and Tac-50 rifle are, one wonders if there isn't something better. Probably, but not at the same price. Analyze a M21 equipped with an AN/PVS-22 and consider the component prices. The tricked out rifle with M3A stock and Harris bipod probably ran around five grand. The suppressor has a list of two grand where legal. The optics' are where a person ties up their money. Say, fifteen hundred in the Nightforce scope and ten grand, give or take, for the UNS. McMillan charges more for the A1R2, pushing the rifle into five figures and the extra magazines are eighty bucks per round. The suppressor costs less than the Surefire suppressor unless you buy a Jet suppressor. Ask yourself if the Jet suppressor is that much quieter than the Elite Iron, twenty-five hundred vs. fifteen hundred.

The real expense in either system isn't the hardware. In the field of Communications, the most important system component is the antenna and in the field of Firearms, the most important component is the ammunition. As a moderately large manufacturer, Black Hills produces the most bang for your buck in 5.56 and 7.62 while Hornady has the ultimate .50 BMG round, the 750gr AMAX. It took one of those rounds to break Carlos' distance record and the bullet came out of the barrel of a McMillan Tac-50.

The origin of the M21 can be traced back to 'Nam. Ronnie Barrett introduced us to the .50 BMG sniper rifle although, John Ross readers will be quick to remind us of the Solothurn S-18/1000 20 mm Anti-Tank rifle, a Swiss and German anti-tank rifle used during the Second World War. It was one of several rifles predating the M82A1 and if a .50 BMG cartridge will hurt you, imagine what a 20mm cartridge could do. The Mk 211 MP

cartridge generally won't explode inside of the victim's body... unless it passes through body armor or goes from one side to the other. Sure will get the attention of a Hummer driver, though.

There wasn't room in the Hummer for me to ride and I ended up going off to 'war' riding my golf cart. Derek said it would keep the seat warm. Derek's unit, F Battery, 142nd Field Artillery Regiment (Target Acquisition Battery), is based in Fayetteville although they do their weekend warrior stuff at Fort Chaffee. Naturally, our destination proved to be Fayetteville. They stopped before arriving at the destination and everything was unloaded.

Dream a Little Dream of Me – Chapter 9

“Gary, wake up, you’re having a nightmare.”

“Huh, what? Go away; I finally owned all the firearms I want and a ton of Black Hills ammo.”

“You’ve been tossing and turning all night. I looked in on you several times... I guess I should have woken you earlier.”

“What’s the date today?”

“It’s March 23rd, 2015, your 72nd birthday.”

“Do we own any firearms?”

“Several. Don’t you remember?”

“In my dream we owned at least one of everything I ever wanted, legal or not.”

“For the most part, we do own everything you ever wanted. Ninety-nine percent of it is illegal in California.”

“An M21? A Tac-50? Nightforce scopes and night vision devices?”

“Plus Heckler and Koch 416s and 417s with grenade launchers. That’s why we moved to Arizona. When California passed the law eliminating the sale of certain semi-auto rifles, you said ‘enough’ and we moved.”

“When was that?”

“Fifteen months back during January 2014.”

“Do we have a bomb shelter in the back yard?”

“No, the bomb shelter is under our Fleetwood doublewide. You go out the back door and turn left down the ramp. The blast door is in the middle of the end.”

“Which model?”

“The Fleetwood Beacon Hills series, floor plan D, 2 bedroom model with optional activity room and optional study. I use the activity room for my quilting and you use the den for your computer and radio room.”

“What about the study?”

“That’s our gun room.”

“So... it wasn’t all a dream.”

“What else do you remember?”

“North Korea built a bunch of nukes and they ended up stored in various warehouses in the US. They set them off during April, 2015.”

“Let’s hope that wasn’t a premonition or precognition. Next month is April. We bought 5 years of Emergency Essentials Premium one-year food supplies for two. In addition to those 1,680 cans, you added Hungry Man MREs from Nitro-Pak and 2 years of Mountain House pouches for two.”

“Damon and Derek?”

“Damon got his fruit cellar completed and you bought him a Loaded M1A, 590A1 SPX shotgun and a Taurus PT1911B; plus surplus ammo for the rifle and Remington shotgun shells. You also bought him 2 cases of Speer 230gr Gold Dot.

“Derek is retired and working on his PhD in Medieval History.”

“Lorrie and Amy?”

“No change in the Lorrie situation and Amy took over the house payments when she got that promotion. They’re both in the Antelope Valley.”

“Where are we in Arizona?”

“Off I-17 in the general area of the Aqua Fria National Monument.”

“What’s the nearest town?”

“Dewey. We have 5 acres of fenced in sand and rocks.”

“High chaparral?”

“Basically, yes.”

“Snakes?”

“You’ve killed a few rattlers with your Ruger Vaquero using shot shells. You keep the 7½” loaded with Buffalo Bore Deer Grenades and the 4⅝” crossdraw loaded with shot shells. What were you dreaming about?”

“What was that Mama Cass song? *Dream a little dream of me*? Basically, we were able to get all the firearms I’ve wanted for a very long time. You got on the bandwagon and we ended up with a back yard bomb shelter. Then, if I recall correctly, North Korea exploded a dozen smuggled in ten kiloton bombs and 16 of us ended up in the shelter for a couple of months. Obviously North Korea didn’t explode a dozen nukes or you’d have mentioned it. When you woke me, I was out on a mission near Fayetteville, Arkansas.

“The strange part of the dream was the fact that you finally got interested in prepping and insisted on the bomb shelter. Did we put in a 30kw diesel generator?”

“Yes and no... the generator is 30kw, but its propane fueled. And... we bought a used 30,000-gallon propane tank, had it certified after replacing some valve, had it painted with aluminum colored Rust-Oleum primer and paint and buried it. We don’t have a large diesel tank, only 10,000-gallon diesel and 1,000 gasoline tanks, also buried, stabilized with PRI-D or PRI-G.”

“Do we still have the Nissan?”

“Absent an accident, we’ll probably drive it to the junk yard, yes. You acquired all the computers and enough parts to nearly rebuild the car. And, you don’t have a driver’s license because you can’t seem to pass the written test.”

“Obama still president?”

“Until January 20th, 2017. Hillary has stated she won’t run in 2016 and Bobby Jindal from Louisiana is the likely Republican candidate next year. There was quite the shakeup in Congress as a result of that mess back in 2013. Boehner is still Speaker, but Harry Reid will be out after the 2016 election. The House voted to impeach Obama and the Senate found him not guilty. Obamacare is on hold for the moment.”

“Anything else?”

“We both go shooting on Saturday mornings and you’ve been replacing the ammo on a two for one basis. You finally gave in and bought me some 124gr full metal jacket for my Browning and bought extra 124gr +P for your Browning.”

“It’s rather strange but I don’t recall anything that you just told me. All that I seem to remember is the dream.”

“Get a shower and I’ll make a fresh pot of Folgers. Once you get a little coffee in you to jump start your brain, most of what I just explained will come back to you.”

“One more question. In my dream, all of the firearms I purchased were through a strawman. Is any of that true?”

“Only to a very limited extent, do you recall the Hughes Amendment?”

“Yeah, NFA firearms not registered as of May 19, 1986 could no longer be sold to anyone except the military and law enforcement.”

“When did H&K begin producing the HK416 and HK417?”

“Delta Force replaced its M4s with the HK416s in 2004 after tests revealed that the piston operating system significantly reduces malfunctions while increasing the life of parts.”

“Therefore all HK416s and HK417s as well as the grenade launchers are illegal. We have 2 HK416s and 2 HK417s; all equipped with a full set of barrels and hardware plus the 4 H&K AG-C/GLM grenade launchers and half a truckload of 40mm grenades.”

“That dream was close to what you just told me. The only difference was the quantity we ended up with. So, the H&K firearms and grenade launchers were purchased through a strawman?”

“Yes. All of the other NFA items, like silencers or the Phoenix pattern suppressed .22s were purchased directly and legally.”

“What about the MUNS?”

“The night vision scopes on the Tac-50s? You had to get those through the strawman because they can only be sold to military and law enforcement. The night vision scopes on the M21s were purchased from Optics Planet in Chicago.”

“Actually Northbrook but it’s in the Chicago area. How much ammunition do we have?”

“About 11,160 of .50 BMG, over 12,000 rounds each of Black Hills 175gr and Black Hills 168gr 7.62 and 12,000 rounds of Black Hills 62 gr 5.56. We have 2 sets of shotgun shells, his and hers. You use the 3” Brenneke slugs and 3” Remington 15-pellet 00 and 41-pellet #4 buckshot and I use 2¾” Remington reduced recoil sluggers and 8-pellet 00. The .22 Long Rifle ammo must be about 60,000 rounds because it can’t be reloaded and for pistol ammo, you have 5,000 rounds of .45ACP 230gr Gold Dot and the same of 9mm 124gr +P Gold Dot. A portion of the .45ACP is for my PT1911 and like I told you, you replaced my 9mm with 124gr full metal jacket to the tune of 3,000 rounds.

“You have 2 canisters of practice 40mm grenades plus 6 canisters each of smoke and HEDP. Six thousand of the .50 BMG is Hornady 750gr AMAX and the other 5,160 is that military Mk 211.”

“No M1022?”

“He wanted too much so you just bought more Hornady.”

"If you say so, I'll assume it's true. What do we have for knives? I assume we have knives."

"Buck 110 folding hunters, Cold Steel Bowie knives, Spetsnaz shovels and 24" Latin machetes."

"No switchblades?"

"Nope."

"You make the coffee and I'll get my shower after I do my meds."

"Feel better?"

"I feel clean but I think I'm stuck in the dream."

"Would help if I pinched you?"

"Not really, that could be part of the dream. I've got to have some Grape Nuts... my blood sugar was 44 and my blood pressure was 102 over 45 with a pulse of 100."

"Tachycardia?"

"If was over 100, yes. I get a rapid pulse once or twice a week, always in the morning. The highest it's ever been is 111."

"Do you need to see a doctor?"

"Nah, he'd just tell me I have borderline Tachycardia and we already know that. And we lost Kaiser when we moved to Arizona, right?"

"Yes, we did."

"Where do we go now?"

"We saw a doctor in Phoenix and he wrote prescriptions for a year. We went back down in late December and got new scripts. He charged more than Dr. J and didn't have any free samples. However, he wrote prescriptions for the generics and 2 separate 6 month prescriptions for the scheduled drugs like Xanax and Norco."

"Did we load up on Benadryl?"

"Twenty-four bottles of 50mg and 12 bottles of 25mg. He wrote my Xanax for 0.50mg TID and the prescriptions are mail order every 90 days."

“Minimum exam... blood pressure and listened to our hearts and lungs?”

“Exactly, \$125 for each of us... \$250 total.”

“So, what’s the deal on Obamacare?”

“It’s been delayed and not implemented because the compromise between Boehner and Obama. That’s why I said Harry Reid is out as of the 2016 election, he had a hissy fit and I doubt Nancy Pelosi will get reelected to the House.”

“Two down and Boxer, Feinstein and Schumer to go.”

“Don’t hold your breath; Boxer and Feinstein get most of the vote for the Bay area.”

“I blew one of them up in one of the stories I wrote, but I have no idea which story.”

“Why didn’t you just shoot her?”

“Too risky, she has a CCW.”

“How’d she get that?”

“She became Mayor of San Francisco when Mayor George Moscone and City Supervisor Harvey Milk were assassinated. It probably stems from that.

“You’re going to need to be patient with me. It seems that I’ve lost 2 years of memories and had them replaced by that darned dream. Do we have any pets?”

“One, a dog named Shep.”

“What about Scrappy, Buster, Minnie Mouse and Elizabeth?”

“Some are in boxes with Missy and the other pets.”

“What happened to Elizabeth? I seem to remember you telling she should live for another 10 years.”

“Do you also remember me telling you she had an enlarged heart?”

“Sorta.”

“She had a heart attack. Scrappy had cancer and Amy kept Buster and Sydney. Minnie Mouse died in her sleep, cause unknown. Amy kept all five cats. After we moved, we got a German Sheppard pup. He’s close to 2 years old and is house trained. Shep seems to be a natural born guard dog. We couldn’t afford to have him trained but he doesn’t really need it.”

“Do I have a Golf Cart?”

“Of course. We bought it used and had it refurbished. You added gun racks, storage for the 40mm grenades, hand grenades, rockets and all those loaded ammo magazines. Why do you need 1,125 rounds for your M21?”

“Let me guess. I have 25 of the 25-round magazines and 10 of the X-Products 50-round drum magazines plus 7 magazines for the Taurus and Browning. Maybe 5 magazines for the PPK, and 30 magazines each for the H&K rifles, right?”

“Three spare Browning magazines you carry and 7 total. You said the H&K magazines might be hard to find.”

“H&K makes a 50 round drum for the HK417, do we have those?”

“Ten apiece.”

“Drum magazines for the HK416s?”

“No, you refused to buy the Beta-C drums saying they were unreliable and we have 100 X-Products drums on order. They work in any rifle that takes an M16 magazine.

“You do know how foolish it is to have that many rounds of ammo in magazines don't you?”

“What do you mean?”

“Well think about it Gary, since all the magazines are loaded and you carry everything you have on your Golf Cart, you'll be dead before you use a tenth of the ammo. You aren't Superman and you aren't bulletproof. The body armor you bought only protects part of your body, your torso. Anyone you'd go up against probably has snipers, too. Even with the MultiCam you aren't invisible.”

“But, the suppressors help make me invisible.”

“They make the rifle invisible. But if the other side has infrared, your body heat and the heat of the rifle barrel and silencer will give you away.”

“Did I make fighting positions?”

“Several.”

“Then, what's the problem?”

“Where do you think you killed the rattlesnakes?”

“Oh. Man, I hate snakes.”

“Red touch yellow, him bite fellow?”

“Huh?”

“You taught me that to distinguish a Coral snake from a King snake.”

“Oh, that. It is true but we’re unlikely to see a Coral snake because they prefer the low regions of the Sonoran Desert. The most likely are the Western Diamondback, Mojave and Arizona Black in this area. However, there are ~20 species in Arizona, we could see anything.”

“Are you getting your memory back?”

“There are some things a person never forgets. I saw my first rattlesnake on the farm east of Greene when I was 4 years old. Dad and I were walking in a field and came up on the snake.”

“What happened?”

“He killed it with a shovel.”

“Is that why you don’t like snakes?”

“I don’t think so. I’m sure it was something else... I really don’t know where my fear of snakes comes from. Wait a minute, I do remember. In 1954, Bill Haast was bitten by a common aka blue krait, *Bungarus candidus*, and I read about it when we went to Bob and Marty’s to visit.”

It was strange, as I handled each of our firearms, I seemed to know instinctively what every part and switch or button did. Obviously it was something I’d learned earlier and couldn’t remember until I had the firearm in hand. Sharon directed me to the area set up as a range and over the course of the next ten days I re-familiarized myself with each firearm.

Everybody is something. I just happen to be a gun nut with 51 years membership in the NRA. My fondness was for military style firearms, excluding the AR-15, M-16 and M-4. Due to their direct gas impingement systems, they were accidents looking for a place to happen. I liked the HK416 and HK417 and didn’t like the HK91 or HK93. Neither did I like the clones made by PTR. I think it may be because they didn’t look like an American rifle like the Garand and its sibling the M14 or the civilian versions produced by Springfield Armory, Inc., Smith Enterprises and Fulton Armory.

I did like the Mini14, especially when it was fitted with an aftermarket heavy barrel. That said I hadn't seen any in our gun collection. Was that an oversight or an intentional decision because we already had the HK416s? I really don't know, but suspect the latter.

"I forgot to tell you, the gun store in Flagstaff called. They have the Mini14s modified with the heavier barrels and those 30-round magazines."

"I was just thinking about Mini14s and the fact we didn't have any."

"We bought two of those and two Ruger SR556s. They're ready to be picked up including the additional 24,000-rounds of 62 gr Black Hills 5.56."

"That's 48 cases."

"I wondered why he said 'bring your trailer and we'll load the pallet of ammo with our forklift'."

"We should have ordered a full pallet... 60 cases."

"You suggested that, but we didn't have the money at the time."

"Now that sounds more like me. Remind me why we bought the Mini14s and the SR556s."

"I suggested we buy the SR556s and you would only agree if we could get modified Mini14s with the heavy aftermarket barrels. Plus you insisted on threaded barrels that we could mount Surefire suppressors on. We're still waiting on the tax stamps."

"Logical. PMags for the SRs and PMI for the Minis?"

"Why didn't you get the 30-round Ruger magazines?"

"They're manufactured by C Products not Pro Mag Industries."

"Are you sure?"

"No but their 30-round magazines for SR556 are made by C Products. Say, you didn't say whether or not they swapped out the barrels on the SR556s."

"I still don't understand why you wanted them changed."

"Standard rifling in the SR556 is 1:9. To handle the heavy bullets, we need 1:7. Both rifles have 1:9 and need 1:7 for the ammo we bought or heavier bullet weights. Besides, the barrel on the Mini is too light and therefore inaccurate. They tend to heat up and there is the problem with the vibration. Ruger produced the target model with a dampener and they're as ugly as sin. Were we able to get the original folding stocks?"

“You don’t remember any of this, do you?”

“No, it’s not test, I’m just trying to get up to speed. The stocks?”

“He found four new in the box Ruger replacement stocks and we bought all four, just in case you said. Just in case of what?”

“Just in case we buy 2 more Minis.”

“The only thing we have duplicated is the Ruger Vaqueros since we each have 4⁵/₈”, 5¹/₂” and 7¹/₂” barrels.”

“We didn’t get 2 of the 3³/₄” Sheriff’s models?”

“He couldn’t find any for sale. He’s still looking. I don’t understand why you’d want that short of a barrel.”

“Simple, 7¹/₂” right hand and 4⁵/₈” crossdraw plus a second pair with 5¹/₂” right hand and 3³/₄” crossdraw. As long as they’re the original Vaqueros, they’ll handle the Buffalo Bore Deer Grenade.”

“That’s good because I bought Cowboy loads. I do load the shot shells in crossdraw revolver for the same reason you do, snakes. You’re a total gun nut and if you don’t know it, I don’t need to know it. On the other hand, I don’t think there is anything about our firearms you haven’t taught me. You did say that if I can take down the M21, the Mini14 would be a snap.”

“I don’t remember telling you that, but it’s essentially true. Some of the specifics are slightly different, but they shouldn’t throw you any curves because the Mini is simpler.”

“Will you teach me about the SR556?”

“As soon as I figure it out, yes. My first step will be to read the owner’s manual. Then, following the steps outlined in the manual, disassemble, clean and reassemble the carbine. I call it a carbine because the factory barrel is about 16”. If I was true to how I usually do things, the new 1:7 barrels are 20” barrels.”

“I don’t know; you discussed with the man who took the order. All I did was make sure I got a SR556 and a Mini14 and wrote the check.”

“Expensive?”

“Do you have any idea how much 24,000-rounds of Black Hills ammo cost?”

“Maybe \$48,000?”

“Close. That’s after the discount he gave us for buying 48 500-round cases. He said MSRP was ~\$47.33 per 20 or ~\$1,183.25 a case.”

“So, 48 cases would be about \$57 thousand?”

“Yes, we got it for \$50 thousand or ~\$2.08 a round including tax. That’s basically \$2.00 a round so don’t waste it. Use the Prvi Partisan for practice until everything is sighted in.”

“We have a lot of the Serbian?”

“Same bullet weights as the Black Hills and its match grade, just a LOT cheaper... about a buck a round.”

“The Serbs make good ammo and have for 80-90 years. That said, it’s not Black Hills and I think the Black Hills is the best.”

“Will the Black Hills kill them deader than the Serbian?”

“No. But it makes it more likely you’ll get one shot kills.”

“That Loaded M1A I bought for you and you gave to Derek was nearly as accurate as our fancy M21s.”

“Yeah, I got what they used to call one in a thousand. You should have seen him shoot at 400 meters, 2 rounds dead center.”

“And then you turned around and replaced everything times two so I had exactly what you have.”

“It’s only fair. Besides, it gave me a backup for each firearm. I made you learn to shoot all of them in case I got taken out first.”

“Just remember to check the fighting holes for rattlesnakes and you’ll be fine. We’re long way from a doctor and I think the closest is in Prescott or Prescott Valley.”

“Go to Prescott, Ron and Linda moved to Prescott Valley. Since he doesn’t seem to want to have anything to do with me, I don’t want to have anything to do with him.”

“The One Amigo still rides, huh?”

“We have horses?”

“No, I was just saying. However, I did buy scabbards when we bought the leather from Kirkpatrick. I also got saddle bags, pommel bags and lariats. I won’t buy saddles until

we buy horses. I was thinking that I should get a Morgan because I'm as heavy as Dan Blocker. You can get by with any gelding you choose. I recommend an American Saddlebred."

"Nope, if you get a Morgan, I want a Morgan."

"Why?"

"The American Saddlebred is taller than a Morgan and a Morgan puts me closer to the ground if I fall off. That way you can ride either horse and I can carry more ammo."

Dream a Little Dream of Me – Chapter 10

“You do recall that I didn’t know what kind of gun nut you were until we moved to Dav-
enport.”

“Well, it was for better or worse.”

“And after we moved to California, it got worse.”

“True, but that all changed in 1989 with the Roberti-Roos Assault Weapons Control Act. And the Governor Moonbeam got elected for his third term and almost everything be-
came illegal.”

“That’s why we moved?”

“That and to get away from Amy. You don’t really need the Xanax anymore and we’ve
built a huge supply of that and Norco.”

“Do we really need that much?”

“Would you rather have it and not need it or need it and not have it?”

“Why do you need all those bottles of Norco?”

“Just in case. You know, maybe I get shot and not killed and need a pain killer to get me
to the hospital in Prescott.”

“But Prescott Valley is closer.”

“Ten minutes won’t make a difference.”

“Yavapai Regional Medical Center-East is in Prescott Valley and it’s a 50-bed, state-of-
the-art hospital that offers a number of healing services. Yavapai Regional Medical Cen-
ter-West is a 127-bed facility that’s the cornerstone of the hospital’s growing healthcare
presence in western Yavapai County. Prescott Valley is ten minutes closer and if we
need treatment, we’ll go there. End of discussion.”

Aqua Fria National Monument, huh? Why? Then it came to me, I’d written about Aqua
Fria in *99 The Assault Weapons Ban*. Aqua Fria was now named Dewey-Humboldt. Not
surprisingly we had about the same firearms since I’m nothing if not consistent. In the
previous story we owned 40 acres, but no mule. In this story the 40 acres were reduced
to 5 and we still didn’t have a mule. Maybe I should get a Mule rather than a Morgan if
we bought ‘horses’.

If I was confused when Sharon woke me, my confusion was now beyond the pale. Naturally I looked up the expression *beyond the pale*. It was confusing; I'm German, not Irish. And, I can't remember reading a story of that name by Rudyard Kipling. If you're confused, you're a distant third. I'm in first and Sharon is in second. The only resolution to the situation was, *Don't worry... be happy*.

And why not? We owned our 5 acres outright according to Sharon and the home and all the improvements were paid for; again, according to Sharon. I'd seen all of the firearms and ordnance, legal and illegal. When I'd test fired them, I was a decent shot... but my name was Gary, not Carlos (Hathcock). But, that's good because Carlos died. I never understood his being upset at being forced out of the Corps on a 100% medical disability rather than his 50% pension.

Strangely, I could remember details like that but couldn't separate reality from my dream. North Korea had detonated the 12 weapons the night of April 15, 2015 but it happened after midnight meaning the correct date was April 16th. April 16th, 2015 was only ~3 weeks in the future.

That said I began checking the supplies in the bomb shelter against a printed inventory list Sharon gave me. Any difference could be covered with a trip to Costco in Prescott. With that in mind, I generated a short list. One cabinet was locked and I could find the liquor listed on the inventory list. Why did we have liquor on the list, I'm a recovering alcoholic with 17+ years sober? When one doesn't know, one asks.

"Is the liquor in that locked cabinet in the shelter?"

"Yes, and I have the only keys."

"What's in the cabinet?"

"Jack Black, Gentleman Jack, Single barrel, Maker's Mark bourbon, Bombay Sapphire gin, Chivas Regal scotch, Absolute vodka, 1800 tequila, Grand Mariner, Drambuie, sweet and dry vermouth and other things needed to make cocktails."

"Lime juice?"

"In the freezer and the various mixes are on the food shelves. If you didn't notice, we have 2 25ft³ Sears chest freezers. They're packed with commercial pork cuts in 2 portion packages, Cure 81 hams, Hormel thick sliced bacon and Jimmy Dean sausage. We bought a whole Black Angus beef and extra boneless to get ground sirloin (10% fat). Plus as much bread flour as we could fit in.

"Your comfort foods include, Hormel beef tamales, assorted burritos, muffin mixes, brownie mix, cookie mixes and Devil's food cake mixes. All 360 57oz cans of Folgers is Classic Roast. There is Coke Classic and Coke Zero; the Classic will last forever but the Coke Zero had a definite shelf life. The garage refrigerator (only) is also in the shelter.

“The medical cabinet is another metal cabinet and contains everything but our insulin; we both used the same, Humulin-N, but different syringes. We added a few incidentals: an automated external defibrillator (AED), a 10 liter oxygen concentrator plus 12 bottles of oxygen with regulators, nasal cannulas and masks, extra blood sugar testing equipment, a spare blood pressure cuff, 3,200 tabs of Norco 325/10 and 2,950 extra tabs of Xanax 0.5mg. You said if you died I could sell those drugs on the street for a fortune or keep them because they have a very long shelf life.”

“Ok, good. Do we have communications equipment and things of that nature?”

“Running out our ears. You went whole hog on the radiation gear and have three models of the AMP Area Monitors, more dosimeters than we’ll ever use and several portable Geiger counters or survey meters. Do you know what an M50 is?”

“How many?”

“Twelve masks and 6 cases of filters per mask. What is a level B suit?”

“That’s just short of being fully encapsulated. Which model?”

“CPF 3 - High Performance Chemical Suit. Plus tape, gloves, boots etc.”

“It’s only about 3 weeks until April 16th. The North Koreans detonated the nukes during the night of the 15th, ergo early on April 16th.”

“Was that part of your dream?”

“Yep.”

“That means I was right, you were having a nightmare.”

“But was it a dream or a premonition?”

“I guess we’ll know in 3 weeks. We’re okay on meds, you did the lost prescription bit twice and we buy from two pharmacies.”

“I made a short list of fill in items from Costco.”

“Phoenix or Prescott?”

“Prescott.”

“How many hams?”

“Two cases.”

“We’d better go to Phoenix.”

“If we hit all the Costco stores and some of the Sam’s Clubs, we should be able to get all we want. We should have time to order from Hormel up in Austin. What about the liquor cabinet?”

“We need 1800, Grand Marnier and frozen key lime juice. Twelve 1800, 5 Grand Marnier and all the frozen lime juice we can find.”

“Maybe you should double that. Can you call Austin?”

“I’ll do that now.”

“Going to Phoenix tomorrow?”

“Sure. If we leave by 8:30 we’ll be there before they open.”

“Something occurred to me about the situation we’re in. A recent story I wrote, *99 The Assault Weapons Ban* was set in this location. In that story, my characters were very well off and had 40 acres rather than 5. They also had a hired man and he got married during the course of the story.”

“Did they have horses?”

“Yes, American Saddlebreds. I could check, but I think his name was Harry Callahan and his new wife’s name was Darlene.”

“How did it end?”

“Remember the 2000 election?”

“What does that have to do with your story?”

“You asked how it ended. It sort of ended with a hanging chad waiting for ATF to show up.”

“Did they?”

“Nope.”

“If it was like most of your stories, they ended up with tens of thousands of rounds of ammo and never got into a single firefight.”

“True. One expression I often use is *would you rather have it and not need it or need it and not have it*. Another comes from *Heartbreak Ridge*, *Improvise, Adapt and Over-*

come. The most common is a quote from George Santayana Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

On the way to Phoenix the next morning, I was tired. It was caused by my fitful sleep the previous night. This time I couldn't recall the dreams so I hadn't had nightmares. I went over the revised list: 4 cases of Cure 81 half hams, 4 cases of Hormel thick sliced bacon, 4 cases of Jimmy Dean sausage, 4 cases of butter, 96 cans of Folgers, 36 boxes of Velveeta, 36 jars of Cheese Whiz, as many bundles of Kraft macaroni and cheese as we could get, canned tuna, beef, chicken and ham, mayonnaise, 500 pounds of bread flour, the booze and frozen lime juice, 12 gallons of vegetable oil, 18 cans of Crisco, 5 20-pound bags of baking potatoes, 5 10-pound bags of red potatoes, onions, any bulk veggies that caught our fancy including celery and... don't forget the Charmin!

If we got to Sam's Club, assorted pasta and all the pasta sauce they had of the kind Sharon liked. Frozen garlic bread. Say, maybe we should go by Sears and pick up another 25ft³ chest freezer and have it delivered... before the 15th. The grocery list would half fill the freezer and if we got the freezer first, we could haul it on the trailer and store any frozen foods in it 'cause the 7kw PowerBoss had a full tank of gas and there is plenty of spare gas. We could pack the Charmin around the freezer to ensure it didn't shift around. Sears would have to remove the packaging from the freezer and that would probably run \$20. Open trailer but the freezer has a lock... and the generator and gas cans were chained down.

If North Korea didn't have a dozen bombs stored around the country, we wouldn't need to go grocery shopping for a very long time. I recalled reading a news article that said Al Gore was right and we'd reach the tipping point in 2047... I should live so long. I'd be 104 and Sharon 100. We still needed to go to Prescott so I could pick up 30 cartons of smokes at the Res. Maybe I should get 60 cartons... it would depend on the bank balance. Sixty cartons were about a one year supply. When I'd done the inventory, I'd counted 90 cartons. We'd be ok unless we ended up with a GTW. I doubted Obama had the cojones to retaliate.

It was almost 2100 when we arrived back from Phoenix. I ran an extension cord to the freezer and shutdown the PowerBoss. Everything would keep until the next morning and I closed and locked the road gate and let Shep run free. He had a sturdy doghouse if it cooled off, which we doubted.

We both slept in until 9:15 in my case and 9:30 in her case. I got a shower and brushed my remaining 4 teeth. I'd shaved over the weekend and was good for about 3-4 more days. After getting the Folgers brewing, I had a bowl of Grape Nuts, used the bathroom and started unloading. The Charmin came first and I got the 2 wheeler to take the heavier stuff to the shelter.

She didn't put in an appearance until about 10:30 and said she had a headache. She said she'd take 2 Tylenol and rest for an hour before she started helping. I have 4 wrist

watches and never wear one because the bands all needed to be shortened. I checked the 24 hour clock over the radio table from time to time and went in to see if she was feeling better. She was still sleeping and I'd have everything unloaded in ~30-45 minutes. She was using the fancy new CPAP and appeared to be getting some rest.

I finished unloading and emptied the new freezer's contents onto the counter and tables in the shelter. The Sears guy left the freezer sitting on the bottom of the box so I got it unloaded and only needed one Band-Aid. She was awake when I went into the bathroom for the Band-Aid and got dressed so she could help get that heavy mother down the ramp into the shelter. Rather than returning everything to the new freezer, we dated the packages and sorted the food among the three freezers. The 21ft³ was in Palmdale and Amy and Lorrie were supposed to be sharing it.

We really doubted that was the case because Lorrie and Amy were fire and ice and there was little love lost between the girls. Amy had a rather aggressive personality and Lorrie was able to ignore her 95% of the time. Lorrie's job was at the handicapped center and she made about \$3/hr. Amy was now a supervisor at DCFS and couldn't earn enough money to support her lifestyle. Rather than spending time with Audrey and Udell raising them, she spent herself into the poor house buying them off.

I've heard other preppers claim the problem is the school system. In this case that was only half of the problem. At 16, Audrey was in charge of feeding Udell and herself. And, Audrey was as much of a witch as her mother. I presume most of what they ate was prepared in a microwave.

After a bite of lunch, she drove us up to Flagstaff to pick up the rifles and ammo. The tax stamps were in and we took everything home. Sharon told me the balance of the checking account and I was limited to 30 cartons at the Res. After we got home and had everything put up, I started reading the owner's manual for the SR556. It was about the same as the H&K rifles so I held class to bring Sharon up to speed. Then, I switched out the stocks on the Minis.

After supper, I started moving the 48 cases of Black Hills to the shelter, except for the ammo it would take to fill 120 30-round magazines (8 cases). Magpul got its name from the slip-on rubber loop for easy extraction of magazines. They ran ~\$10/3 pack and were available in 5.56 and 7.62. We'd picked up enough Magpuls for our M21s, Loadeds, HK417s, HK416s, Mini14s and the SR556s.

While I'm not enamored with the 5.56, it was the most likely and easiest to find ammo in a true survival situation. I've long maintained that any rifle that shoots cartridges smaller than 7.62 are strictly backup guns. Yes, they'll kill you just as dead and most of my objections related to the direct gas impingement system. All 6 of our 5.56x45mm rifles had 20" barrels and gas pistons with ACOGs and match grade ammo. All 4 of our 7.62x51mm rifles had gas pistons, scopes and bipods. All 12 of our military style rifles had suppressors. The 2 missing rifles are M1A Loaded models.

The 50-round drums from X-Products finally arrived on April 10th. There was a flurry of activity while we loaded those. We could transport 1,125 rounds of 175gr for each of the M21s, 1,100 rounds of 168gr for each of the HK417s or Loadeds and 1,400 rounds each for the Minis, SR556s and the HK416s. We carried 53 rounds for our Browning's, 35 rounds for the Walther's and 57 rounds for the PT1911Bs. Both 590A1s were set up the same except for the ammo. She carried the low recoil Remington LEO ammo and I carried the full power 3" Brenneke 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ oz Black Magic slugs and Express Magnum 15-pellet 00 and 41-pellet #4 buckshot. We each had five magazines loaded with Mk 211 and six loaded with Hornady AMAX.

We either carried Cowboy guns or military style guns. The bladed weapons would be carried with either. Although we wanted the San Mai III Natchez Bowies, the slightly smaller Laredo Bowies made good substitutes. They required much less sharpening since the clip point was already sharpened. The Machetes got 2-3 passes through a meat cutters belt sharpener as did the shovels and I ran them across the oval steel. The Folding Hunters were sharpened on the DMT stones we used on the Bowies. We bought the set of five stones and added the EF 4,000 and EEF 8,000 grit finishing stones. I honestly believe they were sharper than Derek's knives.

Since we couldn't get another Sauer 38H, Damon had to settle for a PPK in .380. We also got him a Cold Steel Laredo in SK-5, a Buck 110 Folding Hunter, Latin machete and 5" boot knife. We sent both boys a 6 piece set of the DMT sharpeners, omitting the 4,000 grit.

Derek and the 4 kids came to visit and would drop off Damon's 'presents' on the way home. They could only stay a few days and I brought him up to speed on my dream.

"How sure are you?"

"The odds are 50-50, but I've never before had a dream like that. Did you bring your equipment?"

"Yes sir."

"Could you use some 168gr Prvi Partizan match?"

"You bet. Would you show me your shelter, please?"

"Help yourself."

"How much food do you have stored?"

"Enough. The lumber to subdivide the shelter is stacked over there along with insulation, drywall and bunk beds. Everything needed to finish the interior is just waiting to be installed. There is room for a co-ed bunkroom and 4 bedrooms, all queens. There are only 2 bathrooms with stools, sinks and shower stalls, his and hers. The total floor

space is 2,280ft³. The propane generator, PV panels and wind turbine feed 2 banks of submarine batteries. We use combined charge controllers/inverters. Even without the generator we can produce over 200 amps at 240 volts. How's school going?"

"I submitted my dissertation last week. They'll let me know when the second oral is scheduled."

"Line up a job?"

"Associate Professor in Medieval History."

"Do you intend on applying to the Military Academies?"

"Maybe; my main emphasis was in Medieval History."

"Think you have a shot at any of the four?"

"Maybe West Point. You already know what I think of officers."

"Keep that to yourself."

"Did I see power lines?"

"Power and phone both. We have a grid tie set up and generally supply the utility company with electricity. There are 2 25kw wind turbines and 50kw of PV panels. The PV panels and wind turbines feed the twin battery banks and if the batteries get low, its dark, commercial power is off and the wind isn't blowing the 30kw generator kicks in to provide power and recharge the batteries."

"You're totally self-sufficient?"

"I'd prefer to use the term close. Nobody is ever 100% prepared. I believe the secret is having options. If all our power options fail, we still have the 7kw PowerBoss and plenty of gasoline."

"Does that explain why you always salvage after a disaster in your stories?"

"A person can't buy and store enough manufactured goods to last forever. The one thing I tend to over-accumulate is ammunition and that's probably because I don't re-load. It also explains why the old fashioned calibers like .45 Colt and .45-70 and the firearms to use them are included in my armory. One can measure black powder by volume and cast lead bullets if one has the molds and old, pre zinc, wheel weights. Zinc will work for bullets but wears out your barrels too fast."

"How do you identify zinc weights?"

“They’re labeled with a Zn notation. The upside is zinc is armor piercing. The EPA has a website promoting the elimination of lead wheel weights. Just remember, zinc only pierces body armor because it’s brittle.”

“So, do you have the url?”

“It’s <http://www.epa.gov/wastes/hazard/wastemin/nlffwi.htm> A few states Like Kalifornia have outlawed lead wheel weights, but I found references supporting the use of lead wheels weights for bullets. At http://www.ehow.com/how_7601023_use-tire-weights-reloading.html it says *Reloaders use lead to cast bullets. Alloyed with other metals, like antimony, lead is the primary metal used to cast bullets and lead tire (wheel) weights make great bullets. Alloy composition – the elements other than lead within the alloy – determines the hardness of the lead and it's suitability for casting bullets. High velocity bullets require a harder alloy than low velocity bullets and adding small amounts of tin or antimony to molten lead will harden it while arsenic serves as a catalyst in treating lead/antimony alloys. Tin and antimony are both found in clip-on and stick-on wheel weights. Arsenic is found in clip-on wheel weights only.* If you don’t kill them, you might succeed in poisoning them.”

“Do really believe that?”

“Nah... probably doesn’t have enough arsenic to kill them. With that in mind, it’s important that you get a good shot placement. If you don’t mind me asking, why did you bugout? I heard that Fort Chaffee was surrounded and the military made a full sweep without finding anyone.”

“Would you buy ‘discretion is the better part of valor’?”

“I would if that’s the real reason, yes. What aren’t you telling me?”

“They had a list of names and addresses. Even with the weapons, ammunition and other ordnance we had, our Battery didn’t have a chance against the 2 Brigade Combat Teams we were up against. Everyone loaded up all they could carry, got their families, and, in some cases some friends, and scattered to the 4 winds.”

“And since they think Sharon and I still live in Palmdale, Aqua Fria was a logical choice. What’s in the Conex?”

“A little of this and that and a lot of some things one wouldn’t typically find on the TOE of a counterfire unit. More of the H&K weapons including several PSG1A1s with Brügger & Thomet suppressors and a Schmidt & Bender 3-12x50mm Police Marksman II scopes. I’ll put one of those up against a M21. We have both 20-round magazines and 4 50-round drums per rifle.”

“Get any of the .45ACP UMPs?”

“Seven. They have Picatinny rails attached to the uppers and suppressors. We couldn’t come up with Gold Dot but did get 106 cases of Remington Golden Saber 185gr +P HPJ. Want some help finishing off the interior of the shelter?”

“Absolutely. Sharon said she even bought a Ramset to attach the 2x6s to the floor, walls and overhead. Say, I forgot you had to do the plumbing and everything else when you lived in Flippin. I can handle the wiring except for connecting the wires to the distribution panel.”

“Just pull the main fuses or circuit breakers, wire the panel, trip all the breakers and insert the mains. Then you can flip one breaker at a time to make sure you don’t have any shorts.”

It occurred to me that he might not be in a hurry to return to Jonesboro/Lake City. It also occurred to me that there was no reason F Battery should have the PSG1A1s or UMP45s. Beyond that I concluded we might be better off not knowing the source(s) of some of the things in the Conex. It would be just my luck he had found a few cases of the M61 fragmentation grenades. Not that it mattered; I’d used neither the M61s nor M67s when I was in the Air Force. The smoke and flash bangs were more my speed. At my age, can I throw a frag far enough to not blow myself up?

Dream a Little Dream of Me – Chapter 11

It didn't take long to finish off the shelter. We made one large co-ed dorm for the grandchildren and 4 bedrooms. Sharon and I got the first, Derek the second and Damon the third. If Lorrie and Amy showed up, they could share the fourth and the kids would be added to the kids in the co-ed dorm. If they came, it was either I-40 to Flagstaff or I-10 to Phoenix. They'd have to take I-17 from either city to get to our acreage. Sharon talked to both girls and gave them the directions. Lorrie didn't drive so if they came Amy would be making the trip and bringing the 2 grandchildren, Lorrie and her new significant other.

"So, do we want to move the critical items from the Conex?"

"We might be able to squeeze in the weapons but we'll have to find someplace to store the extra ammo and explosives. That fence you have is a problem because it won't keep anyone out. We should deal with that before we unload the Conex. How about we move the weapons and wrap the Conex in 5-6 feet of soil?"

"Before or after we fix the fence?"

"Move the weapons and push up the berm on the side of the Conex nearest the road. Then we can work on the fence and finish the berm on the other 3 sides of the Conex."

"How about a cup of coffee before we start?"

"Folgers?"

"Number one selling brand in the US. If you want French roast or Columbian, you're flat out of luck. I'm saving the case of French Market for special occasions. I don't know if you've ever had it, but I really like it. It contains chicory whatever that is."

"Chicory is a root that is baked, ground, and used as a coffee substitute and additive. A question."

"Yes?"

"Have you started salvaging yet?"

"Nope. I guess I'm waiting for the Revolution to spread or the attack to begin before we start mining. Until that happens we're stocking up on food from Sam's Club and Costco. Sharon keeps a list of what we've used up and we generally go to Phoenix or Prescott depending on what we need and how much of it we need."

"Today's the 14th. If your dream was a premonition, shouldn't we get to Prescott and fill any holes in your supplies?"

“Will you drive?”

“I can do that if you can fill my tank.”

“Help yourself. It’s not a fancy pump and you have to flip the switch between gas and diesel. Flip the switch towards whatever you want.”

“Are the tanks topped off?”

“I don’t know. I’ll mention it to Sharon and if they aren’t, she can have them topped off today including the propane tank.”

“Do you use a lot of propane?”

“The furnace, stove, hot water heaters and generator all use propane. I have no idea how much we use but it can’t be a lot. You’d better check with Elizabeth and get a short list of what she may need ‘cause Sharon don’t need them anymore.”

“Huh?”

“Feminine hygiene and so forth.”

“Right.”

“Call your brother and make sure he has his fruit cellar stocked. If the crap hits the fan on the 16th like I dreamed, he’ll just have to wait for the things you were going to drop off.”

Was I starting to believe my own fiction? One writes 100+ stories and one gets older; perhaps it becomes difficult to distinguish fact from fiction and dreams from reality. The last genuine memory was about the Disaster Web Community website and my smartass post, *So, you want to become prepper*. It was intentionally sarcastic due to my PhD in Sarcasm. It laid out about 99% of the things a new prepper should consider going from point S (starting) to point F (finishing) but the sarcasm seemed to turn people off. Oh, well. Different audience... should have used a different approach.

Funny thing about publishing a CD with my stories was how unrewarding it was. Forty-one sales totaled \$819.59, earning me a huge sum of \$126.00. There were about 199 discs available for sale meaning I could earn \$584, depending on how fast they sold. The slower the sales, the more E-Bay took for fees. Learn and live or vice versa.

Anyway, with lists in hand and Damon forewarned, off we went to Prescott to fill the holes. Sharon had a very short list and she primarily wanted a few more trays of Folgers. I grabbed 18 boxes of candy bars since 3 of our 9 grandchildren would be with us in the shelter should my dream come true. Plus 2 cases of butter, 2 cases bacon, 2

cases of sausage, 2 extra bags of onions and 5 bags of baking potatoes. And, despite a harsh look from Derek, 2 bottles of Chivas and 2 of Drambuie. Ever since I introduced him to a Rusty Nail, it was his favorite mixed drink. I didn't need booze; I had Xanax aka freeze dried alcohol. I bet you thought powdered alcohol was something new.

My cart had much more than Sharon's list... it was tit for tat... I never complained about what she bought. Interestingly enough, she had to write the PIN number for the debit card on a slip of paper because I didn't have one and could never remember the PIN on hers. Why would I need a card, I didn't drive? Frankly, I not sure I would have driven if Arizona issued me a driver's license. I could pass the vision test but not a hearing test. Plus I had my quota of accidents long before I gave up my license in 2003.

"Booze?"

"That's for you in case the cabinet doesn't have enough Chivas and Drambuie. I don't actually know what is in the cabinet since Sharon has the only key. I do know she's set on Margaritas. She likes what one bar called the Golden Cadillac. Two and one-half shots of 1800 in the glass mixed with 2 shots of Grand Marnier and one and one-half shots of key lime juice with a shot of 1800 on the side. The key lime juice is available from bar suppliers and from the frozen food area. I don't know by taste but I read that somewhere sometime and she hasn't complained."

"What's the ratio?"

"The standard ratio 7:4:3 of 50% tequila, 29% Grand Mariner and 21% key lime juice. I use 3½ shots of 1800, 2 shots of Grand Mariner and 1½ half shots of key lime juice and serve it like she likes on the rocks."

"Where did you come up with that ratio?"

"Where else, Wiki; they must have the recipes for hundreds if not thousands of mixed drinks."

"Who makes 1800?"

"Jose Cuervo. Well, the same family owns both brands, but I don't remember the name. We get the one that's 100% pure Agave, 100 proof, Silver Select. It's aged 15 days in an oak cask, I think. They used to call it Cuervo 1800 a few years back. If I were going to take a drink, I'd almost rather have a Margarita even though most of the booze in the cabinet is a Jack Daniels product. There's Jack Black, Gentlemen Jack and Single Barrel plus Maker's Mark bourbon. That's put out by Jim Beam these days. There's also the Chivas, Bombay Sapphire gin, Absolute Vodka, Grand Mariner, Drambuie, sweet and dry vermouth and other things needed to make cocktails. Lime juice is in the freezer and there's Coke, Seven-up, Squirt and the mixers like Collins mix, etc."

"You like bourbon?"

"I drank it, but usually only the cheap stuff like Ten-High from Peoria, Illinois. Jack Daniel's is produced using a bourbon recipe but it's not bourbon because of how it's processed. They run Jack Black through 10' of Sugar Maple charcoal. Gentleman Jack goes through for 2 passes and I have no idea how many times for Single Barrel. You won't find much of that since a 6 bottle case goes for about \$300. You can actually buy a full barrel which is about 248 bottles. The price of the barrel is based on the number of bottles produced."

"You ever think about buying a barrel?"

"Nope. I was already drying out by the time I learned about the product. They've brought a lot of new things since I quit drinking. However, the cabinet contains a selection of the good stuff I liked. Not all of it was top of the line product, either. We only buy the 12 year Chivas since it's intended for Rusty Nails. The gin is more of a premium than the scotch with the Single Barrel being the most expensive selection. It's a shame it doesn't age in the bottle, some of that stuff has Kalifornia tax stamps. The better the booze and the less you mix with it, the smaller the hangover."

"What's the vodka for?"

"In case James Bond shows up and wants a drink... shaken, not stirred."

"We'd better pay out and get this stuff back to the house and put up."

"Down, actually, everything but margarita ingredients goes in in the shelter cabinet."

"How do you keep everything straight?"

"If shelf life is a consideration, everything is dated by the date of purchase. I'm sure it's only an approximation, but it does ensure we use things on a first-in... first out basis. The bread flour is kept frozen to ensure it doesn't go bad. We do the same with the yeast. The other ingredients for bread are stored in our STS and LTS foods. If we run out of flour, there are several pails of hard red/white wheat and the Diamant 525 grinder. I bought a motorization kit for the Country Living Mill and changed the pulley on the motor because the turning wheel on the Country Living Mill is smaller. It took a larger motor pulley to bring the grinder up to speed."

"We're here."

"You take the shelter stuff to the shelter and I'll show you our dating system. I think we can take most of it down and if the crap hits the fan, we'll have less to move. I had intended on getting a set of remote cameras for CCTV, but wasn't sure what EMP would do to them. None of the other PAW fiction writers have really addressed Cloud computing and I'm sure not going to be the guinea pig. Besides with the amount of NSA spying occurring, some of the stories could generate interest from third parties. I have

McAfee set to run a full scan nightly. I know I've probably been hacked based on the number of bounced emails that I didn't send. They were based on my contact list."

"Just one time?"

"I wish. I think the count is up to 3. I suspect it happened because I went to one or more websites I was convinced were safe. Before we moved from Palmdale, Space Wars website was hacked and they ended up shutting down for over a week while they rebuilt their website. I learned to believe McAfee when that happened."

"I assume you only have the Diamant grinder?"

"Actually we have both. The Diamant 525 is our go to grinder but we have a powered Country Living Mill for backup. We actually have spare parts for both mills. Both were tested and the Country Living Mill was cleaned up and relegated to our backup. You know a person could spend themselves into the poor house being redundant. The only redundant communications gear is what's in the Nissan but it's mounted on slide-outs. There are 3 radios, a TS-2000, Motorola CM-300 and a Cobra 148 GTX single side-band. We had to add an extra generator and a deep cycle battery."

"Why isn't your antenna tower extended to full height? That must be a 55' tower."

"Actually, it's a US Towers HDX-689MDPL Tower with 3 standoffs, the heavy duty rotor, 20' chromolly mast, RCM-1000 remote control and MDPL-1000 drive motor. It can be raised or lowered and will fold over to work on the antennas. You should get at least a Technician's license so you can use the gear when you inherit. All the information is in a ring binder in the Faraday cage. Remind me to show you how everything works. Full height is 89' plus the mast. It ran \$38,000 plus."

"What's for dinner?"

"We're having cure 81 ham, smashed potatoes and a green bean casserole with Devil's food cake for desert. Did you get the milk?"

"Two gallons and I'll go get a gallon from the shelter."

"I think I should have put 3 or 4 gallons on the list. We can run up to Cordes Lakes and get more if we need it."

"We do have the instant non-fat powder on the shelf and the Nido Instant Whole Milk Powder stored in the freezer. Half ham?"

"No, I thawed a whole ham so we'll have leftovers for sandwiches."

"Excellent!"

“The ham will be ready by the time I’m back. Can I have the debit card?”

“Sorry. Here.”

“Derek, come with me so you’ll know where it is.”

“Sure.”

“Wondering where the money came from?”

“I assume it wasn’t from the trust since I wasn’t notified.”

“Both my sisters died over a short period of time and I inherited. Any left over when I die goes to Lorrie. I had to make a will to that effect before the funds were dispersed. Charlene didn’t have much, but Shirley was very well off. Amy got a promotion and assumed the house payments. If she misses many, she’ll be out on the street. Frankly, I don’t care.

“We’re here. Help me carry the milk?”

“Sure.”

“Do you think they will drink 4 gallons before it spoils?”

“Probably.”

“Get 4 with the latest dates. I’ll pay. We have 2 debit cards, Iowa and Wells Fargo. Your father only knows about the Iowa card. I’d prefer he not know about the Wells Fargo card.”

“No problem.”

“You take 2 and I’ll take the other 2 to the car. When we get home, please put all 4 in the shelter refrigerator.”

“Okay.”

“Derek, there’s an Oregon Scientific all hazards radio by Sharon’s chair, but I believe the prudent thing to do would be to assume the worst case and move everything to the shelter after we eat and just lock it down. So, we’ll empty the refrigerator and pull the radios and TV. It will be just a little extra work for you and the kids, if you don’t mind.”

“Okay, if you say so.”

After we ate and loaded the dishwasher, it took less than an hour to get everything moved and or pulled and get us down below and locked down. They had been sleeping down there since he and I finished the shelter. He'd finished the berm around the Conex and moved whatever to the gun cabinet. I say whatever since I hadn't looked.

The next morning the ATS warning light wasn't on so we were still connected to the grid. The all hazards radio hadn't sounded, either. I noticed that I hadn't connected it to the Diamond D-130J. After connecting the radio to the discone, we still weren't picking anything up. I pulled the AMP 50 from the cabinet and hooked it to its probe and got a normal background radiation reading. Finally, I tried the AM, FM and shortwave radio bands and they were silent. That's the first time we hadn't been able to receive multiple radio stations and something was very wrong.

"I don't get it. There no warning message on the weather radio, the radiation reading is normal background but none of the AM, FM or shortwave stations are on the air."

"EMP?"

"Sounds like it but why isn't the radiation above background?"

"HEMP?"

"That or a CME but there were no warnings of a CME headed this way. That just leaves HEMP. Did you hear anything on the way out here on the radio?"

"The only thing I heard was the tail end of a newscast suggesting China was starting to build up troops across from Taiwan. I heard that after I crossed the Arizona border from a station in Holbrook."

"Hmm, you don't suppose China exploded a HEMP device do you?"

"I suppose it's possible but MSM wasn't talking about a possible war with China. They did mention that China was having a problem with a satellite they launched. Could that have been a cover story for them putting an EMP device in low earth orbit?"

"Check the power output of the PV panels."

"Normal."

"If there was HEMP detonation, it didn't affect them. Let's cut in the grid feed and see if we have commercial power. Here, let me show you how. We trip this switch and if the ATS switches, there's no commercial power."

"The ATS switched."

“That means the commercial power is out. Let’s check the AMP 50 again and if there’s no radiation, arm up and check topside.”

“What are you going to take?”

“Shotgun and pistol. Why don’t you take the HK417 and a pistol? The Tac-Force chest harnesses have a piece of tape that says M1A or HK417 and the bullet weight, 168gr or 175gr. All the HK magazines are loaded with Black Hills 168gr BTHP. The M1A magazines with 175gr are for the M21s and the 168gr for the 2 Loadeds.”

“I think I’ll take an M21.”

“The UNS and the Nightforce NXS 3.5-15x50mm scope are mounted with Throw Lever rings. The suppressor is a Surefire.”

“Legal?”

“Yes and no; not in California. All the select fire weapons are of recent manufacture.”

“Strawman?”

“Yeah. Wait a cotton picking minute... this doesn’t make any sense.”

“What doesn’t make any sense?”

“You arrived in a HEMTT, right?”

“Yes, carrying a 20’ Conex.”

“And you said 2 Brigade Combat Teams swept Fort Chaffee?”

“I did.”

“And you and the others scattered to the 4 winds?”

“Right again.”

“I wonder if I’m still dreaming.”

“I wouldn’t think so. We’re here and the Conex and what it contains are real enough.”

“But the dream was as real as what I think we’re experiencing now.”

“I can pinch you.”

“Sharon already offered. I declined since it could be part of the dream.”

“Let’s get topside and check around.”

“Well, ok, if you think I’m not dreaming.”

“How do we slide back the road plates?”

“Flip this switch. See, they’re opening.”

“What would you do if there was no power?”

“Stick that crank in that socket and open them manually. Besides, there is an emergency exit in case this exit is blocked.”

“You do things right.”

“That was Jerry D Young’s idea, not mine.”

“Does that AMP 50 show any radiation?”

“Normal background. Let’s check it out.”

“The HEMTT starts.”

“Try the Nissan.”

“It cranks but won’t start.”

“I have spare everything according to Sharon. How much fuel in your tanker?”

“Three thousand gallons of JP-8.”

“HEMP is becoming more likely. It would explain the lack of commercial radio service. What can you remember about the Chinese satellite?”

“Not much besides they launched it into an orbit about 500km high and an engine or something failed causing it to begin to fall back to the earth.”

“I’ll bet it was over North Dakota on the morning of the 16th and exploded causing the HEMP.”

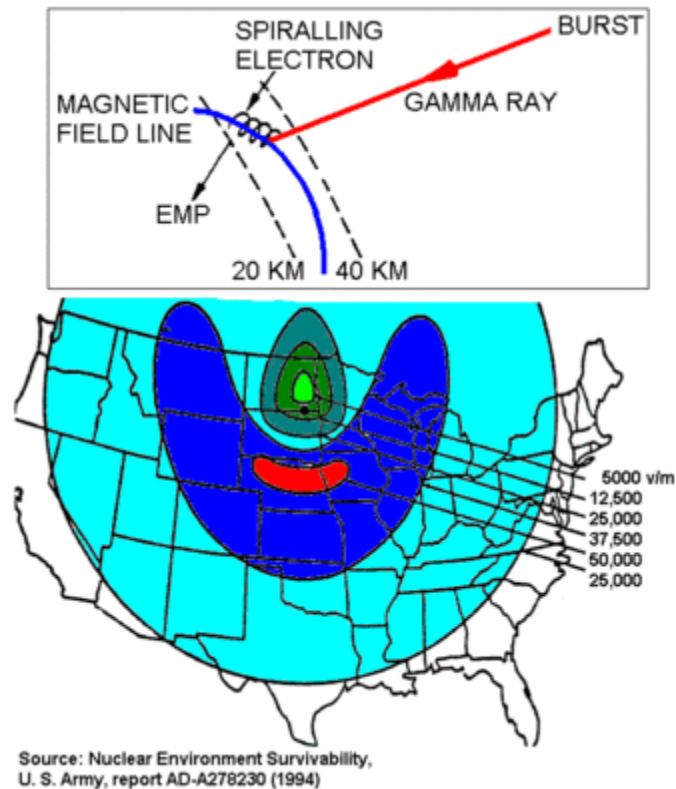
“Can someone do that?”

“They could in 1965 when I got out of the Air Force. That’s 50 years ago. If it were me, I’d launch a satellite with a nuclear ‘power supply’ and program it to appear to be malfunctioning and falling back to the Earth. All timed to detonate over North Dakota. At

400km, even a 10kT enhanced radiation nuke could take out the power in most of the US. There was a map on Wiki but I never bother to download it that I can recall.”

“Can you check your computer?”

“I can search for EMP and see what it brings up... I’ll be darned, I did download it. Look at this:”



“That includes most of Arizona.”

“And, very little of California. That’s not a reason to move back there. Lorrie and Amy don’t have any firearms, either. Amy hates them and Lorrie because I wasn’t comfortable with her having one.”

Dream a Little Dream of Me – Chapter 12

So here we were... my wife and me plus my youngest son and daughter and 3 boys, smack dab in the middle of Arizona after what we concluded had been an HEMP attack.

Assessing our situation, we had a substantial stock of food, apparently unlimited water, ample shelter, and vast stores of diesel, gasoline, lubricants, filters and a drum of kerosene for our lamps. More importantly, to me at least, we had the means to keep it. I reflected on the John Donne quote:

No man is an Island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.

In past tales, I'd referred to the quote because it is the source of a Hemmingway book title and a 1962 motion picture title starring Jeffrey Hunter. The book revolves around the Spanish Civil War and the film is about an American sailor on a Japanese held island during WW II (a true story). Both are appropriate to our situation because we're somehow caught up in a war not of our making and we can only speculate who the enemy is.

"Do you plan on beginning your salvage operation soon?"

"I take it that your question expects a yes or no answer. I'm inclined to say maybe, it depends."

"I'll bite, what does it depend on?"

"If I can go 3 days without another hypoglycemic event, I'd be inclined to start salvaging."

"What's with you and your diabetes?"

"I don't know. My eating patterns are irregular and I can never seem to determine the proper amount of insulin to take. Consequently, my Ischium is so bruised that on some days I can't even walk."

"Sharon said you'd be better off with hyperglycemia than hypoglycemia."

"She told me the same thing. However, she doesn't want me in *her* kitchen making a mess and can't seem to find time to make 3 meals a day. We could try to live on TV dinners and pot pies, but that would get old quickly. As a result, you've probably noticed all the pogy bait we keep on hand. I used to enjoy dry roasted peanuts, M&Ms and Snickers bars. If there is a saving grace in our food supplies, Coke Zero has a short

shelf life. Any time you want a Rusty Nail, get the key to the cabinet from Sharon. You'll forgive me if I don't join you. My best drink besides the margaritas is my martinis."

"How do you make them?"

"Put the gin in the freezer for a couple of hours, remove and pour it straight into a glass. Driest martini in town."

"I can't picture you drinking straight gin."

"I always said that if I got to the point where I could, it would prove I was an alcoholic."

"And?"

"When I got to that point, I changed my mind."

"I think it is time for us to start salvaging. We should go up and down I-17 and look for fuel tankers. When we have enough fuel, we can look for grocery delivery trucks."

"I suppose you're right. Don't forget Camp Navajo. We should be able to get any matériel we're short of."

"Aren't you overlooking something?"

"Maybe. What?"

"We only have 4 adults and about 6-8 weapons each. That doesn't even include the contents of the Conex."

"Did you bring any food?"

"Just some nearly outdated MREs."

"We'll have to find one running semi-tractor. I wish that your brother and his kids had made it."

"What about Lorrie and Amy?"

"Lorrie I could take; Amy is another thing entirely. But, Sharon only gave exact directions to Amy and Lorrie doesn't drive. We finally got her out of our home by moving out and it's never been more peaceful."

"Gary, someone is pulling in. It looks like Damon's Jeep."

"How many passengers?"

“Four. Damon, and older looking woman and the two boys.”

“That’s probably his girlfriend. I wonder why he didn’t bring Britney.”

“She got married. Didn’t you get an invitation?”

“I don’t know because Sharon opens the mail. Sometimes I don’t get my American Rifleman until 3-4 weeks after it arrives.”

“Hi Dad!”

“Damon, Aaron, Eric. Who might this be?”

“My girlfriend Pam.”

“Hello, Pam.”

“Nice to finally meet you Mr. Ott.”

“Gary.”

“Okay, Gary.”

“Where’s Britney?”

“She got married.”

“If an invitation was sent, I didn’t see it.”

“That’s funny... she said she got a reply. Mom huh?”

“Things have been strange lately. I had a dream and seem to have trouble distinguishing the real world from the dream. I got you a Loaded M1A, magazines, a Mossberg shotgun and a Taurus PT1911B plus a few thousand rounds of Serbian 168gr 7.62x51mm ammo, 230gr Gold Dot and Remington shotgun shells.”

“What did you get for Aaron and Eric?”

“Nothing. We just added 2 SR556s and 2 Mini14s. They can use those.”

“Damon, I have some NIB military issue HK416s, with 40mm grenade launchers and plenty of magazines. Does Pam shoot?”

“I think so... but, I’ll ask.”

“You realize that I haven’t done any military shooting since 1964, don’t you? I think I’m what they call Mall Ninja. I understand that term describes an individual who is obsessed with tactical, paramilitary style firearms and modifications, particularly firearms composed mostly of plastic. Such individuals are usually unexperienced novices who compulsively overpay for weapons and accessories not worth their weight in dog crap because such items looked cool in movies and video games. Plus I don’t play video games.”

“But you have 2 of everything!”

“True; we have one of everything for Sharon and one of everything for me. The only one of you that can outshoot her is probably Derek since she can’t shoot a 4” group at 500 yards using iron sights.”

“Did I see fighting positions?”

“I call them foxholes. Be careful before you jump into one, rattlesnakes love ‘em. That’s why I wear the Ruger handguns most of the time; the one with the shorter barrel is filled with shot shells. We need to get to Phoenix and buy radios for all the vehicles plus antennas and have generators installed with an extra battery. We’ll need twice as many CP-200s as CM-300s so we can cover the upper and lower frequencies. I suppose I’d better add one set for Amy, just in case.”

“If we’re going to go, let’s go now.”

“Sharon, we’re going to Phoenix for radios, generators and so forth.”

“Why?”

“Because the kids need them for their vehicles.”

“What wrong with what’s on the shelf in the storeroom?”

“Ok, I’ll bite. What’s on the shelf in the storeroom?”

“Five TS-2000s, 5 CM-300s, 5 Cobra 148 GTL SSB mobiles, 5 spare generators with assorted belts, slide out mounts plus 6 CP-200s for each CM-300, 10 CB handhelds and 5 Galaxy 2547 base stations. Antennas for all of the radios

“Why 5?”

“It’s the spares you insisted on having. The 6 CP-200s allow for 3 pairs for each CM-300.”

“Really?”

“You sound just like Chris.”

“How many years has it been since I talked to him?”

“Nineteen.”

“In my dream they sheltered in our backyard shelter.”

“That should tell you something. Chris would never go into a hole in the ground.”

“Is he still racing?”

“He was the last I knew.”

“What’s for lunch?”

“Sliced ham sandwiches and macaroni salad.”

“Do we have a slicer?”

“We have a slicer, hamburger grinder and a meat tenderizer. You use that to make breaded pork tenderloins. It’s either 3 or 4 passes through the tenderizer then the flour, egg wash and bread crumbs. You even came up with something that tastes like Maid-Rite. It’s missing something but I don’t know what.”

“The Maid-Rite recipe is a secret, you know. I add onion powder since that’s the principal additive. Don’t have any idea what the mixture of spices is. I once heard that the shops received the ground meat in packages and each package had a silver envelope of spices, with no label, that were added to a gallon of water and the meat steamed for several hours. You remember when I showed you how to make the loose meat don’t you?”

“Yes I do, but onion powder and a little garlic powder aren’t the secret.”

“I used too much garlic. There were dozens of recipes for Maid-Rites on the internet but nothing actually tasted like the genuine article. And then there’s that bit about adding Coke. The problem with that is that modern Coke doesn’t use sugar but HFCS. Coke claims it tastes the same, but it doesn’t. Old Coke had a bite that is missing from current Coke products.”

“Are we going to Phoenix or not?”

“Not. Sharon bought everything we need. We have the radios, slide outs, generators, batteries and belts. We still have to figure out mounts for the generators. Let’s check out what she has in the storeroom and figure out how we’re going to do it.”

“DC generators are actually dynamos, Dad,” Damon corrected me. “That’s why they have armatures and brushes to reverse the polarity and produce pulsed DC.”

“I wouldn’t know. I do know that Jerry recommended generators over alternators. Is there enough stuff there to mount them?”

“If she has idler pulleys, I don’t see why not. Damn these are 12 volt high output truck generators.”

“Is that good or bad?”

“More amperage but they take more space. Aaron took a welding class and maybe he can come up with some kind of mount for the generators and idler pulleys. Do you have a welder?”

“I don’t remember, ask Sharon.”

“She said it was in the storage shed and gave me the key.”

“Let’s look.”

“That’s a small 200 amp arc welder and the other rig is an oxy-acetylene rig with a torch. Why does she have more bottles of oxygen than acetylene?”

“These are burning bars aka thermal lances.”

“Chris must have helped her pick that stuff out. Although, I suppose she could have gone to a welding supply shop and bought what they recommended.”

“What are they used for?”

“Among other things, cutting open safes or cutting heavy metal beams. You guys got it figured out?”

“I think so.”

“I’m going to take a nap; wake me when you’re done.”

Over the next 5 days I got several long naps. When they were done, I sat Damon down at my computer to program the Business radios, both mobile and portable. When we were done we went to Prescott to see if Costco was open. It was but the stock had been hit hard. We got what we could and took it home.

The next day we planned on going to Flagstaff and pickup any missing firearms, like shotguns, pistols and anything in stock that tripped my trigger. He was locked up, but I could see him moving inside, so I knocked.

“Oh, it’s you; forget something?”

“Got any M1As?”

“Four Loaded models.”

“Got any shotguns?”

“Four 590A1s, Part number 51663.”

“Pistols?”

“Four Browning Hi-Powers and four Taurus PT1911Bs.”

“Were you expecting me?”

“I figured you’d show up, you have too much ammo for the firearms you bought. I only have 5½” old model Vaqueros and none of the new Winchester rifles. Will Marlin Cowboys work?”

“As long as they aren’t some of the junk Marlin put out when Remington bought them.”

“They aren’t; I bought a dozen of each before the Remington sale and I’m tired of cleaning them. I’ll sell those to you for delivered cost.”

“Add it up.”

“How are you paying?”

“Greenbacks or gold with gold at \$2,500 an ounce.”

“I’ll take the cash.”

“Got any leather?”

“Whatever is in that box; price is on it.”

It came to slightly under ten grand. I pulled a bundle of Ben Franklins and removed the extra.

“Ten thousand dollar bundle and I removed 7 bills. Count it if you want while we load up.”

He actually did before he made change.

“Here’s your change. Anything else strike your fancy?”

“Got any Winchester 9422 XTRs in .22LR?”

“Two. Both are NIB. A local collector died recently and his wife borough in 4 rifles on consignment, 2 .22LR and 2 .22WMR. She needs the money and I’ll forego my commission to get them sold. \$400 each plus tax and I do have 5 cases of .22WMR, 3 hollow point and 2 solid point that you can have at cost plus shipping and sales tax.”

“What’s the rush?”

“As soon as I have enough cash, I’m heading for home to Moore, Oklahoma.”

“We’ll take those and the ammo. How about automatic knives?”

“Two brands, Kershaw and A.G.A. Campolin 18” Rosewood Stiletto Automatic Knives. They’re the Italian stiletto knives with 8” blades. I have the same brand in 4 $\frac{7}{8}$ ” and 6 $\frac{5}{8}$ ” blades.”

“How much?”

“That depends on the blade length and the grip material. They’re all stainless steel blades.”

“Best price?”

“Start counting and I’ll gather the knives. Do you have suppressors for the new M1As?”

“No.”

“I do. Which adapter?”

“Muzzle break.”

“You want the other two SR556s, Mini14s and SR762s?” I had 4 done when I sent your rifles in so I have two of each of what you bought and 4 SR762s.”

“Got those Sadlak scope mounts?”

“Yep. No night vision though. I will throw in the Springfield Armory leather slings. You can have the CMI 25 round magazines at cost.”

“There you go, let me add it up on the register. Wait, AGOGs?”

“No red dot sights left. Give you a good price on some variable power scopes, though.”

“Deal. How much?”

“Call it \$7,500 in round numbers. The extra \$22 dollars doesn’t mean squat on a sale this size.”

It came to about \$17,000 in total. I gave some thought about how to explain the shopping spree the Sharon.

“Get everything you were looking for?”

“And then some; I even got a little extra at dealer’s cost plus freight and sales tax.”

“Bugging out?”

“Headed for Moore, Oklahoma.”

“Wait a day or 2 and take the cutting bars up and open his vault. One day when I talked to him, he said only a little of his merchandise was on the sales floor and the good stuff was locked up in his vault. Did you know he has a class 3 license?”

“No. That would explain several things I’ve wondered about. Oh, we now have 4 9422 XTRs; 2 in .22LR and 2 in .22WRM. I bought 5 cases of the .22WRM. We also picked up several automatic knives in the Italian Stiletto pattern with 6⁵/₈” blades.

“He had 4 M1A Loaded models, 4 590A1s, 4 Browning Hi-Powers. Got 2 more modified SSR556s and 2 more modified Mini14s, 4 Taurus PT1911Bs and 4 SR762s. Magazines went for cost plus shipping and sales tax.”

“I drove around and arranged to have all the fuel tanks topped off. He had another 30,000-gallon propane tank that had been refurbished. The excavation crew will be here tomorrow and he said the tank should be in place by sundown. If it is, they’ll plumb it to the first tank and start filling it immediately.”

“Just how much money did Shirley leave you?”

“More than you think.”

Dream a Little Dream of Me – Chapter 13

'More than I think' covered a larger territory so prudence dictated that I drop the subject. If she wanted me to know, she'd have told me. With the latest firearms acquisitions, we passed out what was available to the most appropriate person for the individual firearms. Next, we spent a day at a range sighting them in and schooling everyone who shot them on cleaning procedures for the individual weapons.

Bad habits were identified and worked on and a second day on the range saw most of the folks overcoming those bad habits. That was when Amy, Lorrie and the kids arrived, absent Lorrie's significant other. We had contacted Avon for more masks and filters and approved Gas masks for more level B suits, boots, gloves and tape, just in case. Overnight shipping assured, at worst 2 day delivery and we had them by the 13th.

Additional orders went out to Walton, EE and Nitro-Pak with requests for expedited shipping. Walton beat both the others for the second time, a miracle however you regard it.

We now had a problem, storage space for the food ordered and delivered. The agreed upon solution was a used 40' insulated Conex with a propane cooler and propane heater. We bought the materials we needed in Flagstaff shortly after we cleaned out the gun dealer's vault. He'd been holding out because he had double the merchandise locked up as he had on display. Everyone now had a UMP45.

Although the US had received a HEMP attack, there was no further action taken against the country.

We had the whole family to feed and we were going through food at a pretty good clip. When a sale came up for cut and wrapped whole Black Angus meat, she bought 4 sides and lots of boneless for 10% ground sirloin. We continued to buy the cure 81 hams, Hormel thick sliced bacon and Jimmy Dean sausage along with cases of butter, cases of bacon, cases of sausage, large bags of onions and 20 pound bags of baking potatoes. Sharon has 'a thing' about being short of food and I'm not much better. We continued to buy major pork cuts like Cure 81 hams and loins by the box.

I generally used one or two of the loins after I removed the back ribs, converted them to breaded pork tenderloins and froze the tenderloin sandwiches before bagging them. I also made Maid-Rite meat. With the good came some bad and another 25ft³ chest freezer was required. It ended up containing Maid-Rite meat, homemade breaded pork tenderloins, bulk packed (restaurant sized) french fries and bulk packed buns.

Derek got word that he had to return to Fayetteville for his orals. When he returned, he had his PhD diploma in Medieval history. However, he wasn't offered the job he expected and applied for teaching positions at ASU and Maricopa County Community College District.

Derek took a while to find a job because he wanted a position that would eventually result in him becoming tenured. The tenure system in the US by this time was all but non-existent. The Ward Churchill case was part of the reason, but the primary reason was non-tenured assistants were paid substantially less. He got a job at ASU, his preferred choice, with a year to year contract.

Damon managed to sell his 4 acre farm near Coulter, Iowa, about breaking even. They had made several improvements but they only made the property more attractive without adding much value. They bought a 3 bedroom singlewide and we provided a lot. Pam and he had to add their own generator, PV panels, propane tank for the generator, battery banks and inverter/charge controllers. They selected a 120' power pole to mount the antennas on with standoffs for the business band, CB, MFJ-1798 10 band vertical and D-130J.

Derek rented an apartment in northern Phoenix that he selected because it had the lowest rent per square foot. Their Landlord was reticent about the antennas and Derek only mounted the D-130J discone and added an antenna tuner to adjust the SWR with the business band and CB. The TS-2000 had a built-in antenna tuner.

The only family members not present were Amy, Lorrie and the 2 grandchildren, Audrey and Udell who had returned to the PRK. Derek was employed as an educator and Derek Jr. was enrolled at ASU. Elizabeth, Joshua and Thomas attended school in Dewey Humboldt and the 3 lived with us 4 nights a week, Monday-Thursday. It was totally unlike Amy living with us because Derek contributed food and kept the shelter up. Derek and Derek Jr. got by quite well in Phoenix because Derek was an above average cook. While the separation due to the jobs wasn't ideal, he was paying off his student loans faster than anticipated.

All good things, it is said, must come to an end and I'll admit the thought occurred to me when Lorrie, Amy et al. showed up on our doorstep the Monday before Thanksgiving. With a trunk full of empty gas cans. I was inclined to cut to the quick and ask 'how much'? You're thinking I didn't like Amy? You've got that right... but the feeling was mutual. I suspected that Lorrie had paid for the gas for the trip to Arizona and would likely pay for the return trip. When you're given sour cherries, bake a pie. I refilled the gas cans and her tank. We put them up in the 'basement'.

After the years of our younger daughter taking advantage of us, Sharon's attitude towards Amy was definitely, 'tough... I don't care'. Lorrie had never been one to take advantage of us if she could avoid it. For someone who barely earned enough to get by, she managed on her own. It gave us the opportunity to pass out the WR602 radios and explain that if the news didn't look good, call. And if we said come to Arizona, make the trip. We even included the rechargeable batteries for the weather radios. We sat Amy down and told her to skip playing the games on her computer until she'd checked the LA Times and Fox News to stay informed of current events. It went in one ear and out the other.

When the subject of Christmas came up, Sharon gave Amy a check for \$300 and Lorrie a check for \$100. I'm as sure as I can be that Sharon probably gave Lorrie 2 Ben Franklins and told her to keep her mouth shut about it. Arriving on Monday, they returned to Palmdale on Black Friday.

Damon had an open trailer with his Kubota tractor and accessories. Attached was an enclosed 6 by 12 U Haul that had their clothing, the Rototiller, gas cans and good furniture. Rosalie, the gal who controlled his money, got approval from the judge for money to buy them durable furnishings. Pam finally had her Extra Class, following him one step behind until she caught up. Aaron was working in Cordes Lakes and Eric in Dewey, at what I had no idea. Both had vehicles so they were doing something right. Both vehicles were used diesel pickups, older than dirt, and had non-electronic diesels.

Over the period of the first year, the vehicles were brought up to wholly serviceable condition and we added the radios and related equipment. We hadn't given Amy the radios Sharon had put up for her Chevy Cruze since she didn't have an amateur license, wasn't really interested and the business band radios would be useless to her in California anyway. She was a member to the current generation with her cell phone glued to her ear.

I sat down and thought about what had happened since I'd been woken from the dream and decided the dream was almost better than reality. Each of my stories was a combination of reality and fiction... mostly the latter... and I somehow got stuck in that groove and apparently couldn't tell the difference. Somehow I had the idea that a comet had hit Agua Fria National Monument between the last time we lived here and the present.

I needed a drink. Man did I need a drink. Ron told me that if I ever wanted to go off the wagon, he'd buy me the first drink. I reminded Sharon of what he always said and she said "Fine," and mixed me a Jack and Squirt. I sat and looked at it until the ice melted and left it set, showered and took a nap. When I got up later, she asked, "You didn't want it?"

"I wanted it, believe me. I couldn't pick up the glass, I watched it until the ice melted, took a shower and had a nap."

"Do you feel better?"

"I feel awful."

"But why? You proved to yourself you didn't need the drink. You obviously didn't taste it."

"How do you know?"

"I substituted Coke Zero for the Jack Daniels. If you'd have tasted it, you'd have known."

"I'm confused. I've been confused since you woke me from the dream a year or more back. How about a fact check?"

"Go ahead."

"We're near the Agua Fria National Monument, living in a Fleetwood Beacon Hills floor plan D with modifications. I have every firearm I ever wanted and you have what I have. Damon and Derek moved here and Derek teaches at ASU and kids go to school in Dewey-Humboldt. Lorrie and Amy visited for Thanksgiving and she never said one word to me."

"Technically, you're batting 1,000 but after the lecture about following the news she looked at both of us like we were crazy. They left the next day and went back to Palmdale."

"I'm in a rut."

"Only as long as you choose to stay there. I found some Morgans and bought the other 75 acres making up this $\frac{1}{8}$ section. Damon has the irrigation in and the grass combination is coming up. I bought you a gelding and named it Salina for old time's sake. Once you get over your fear of horses, it won't run unless you want it to. One thing I've noticed is that we're living in rattlesnake heaven. I made sure none of the horses was gun shy. They are, however, snake shy and you can expect a reaction if you get too close to a snake."

"How many have we killed?"

"Snakes? Between 25 and 30 including Western Diamondbacks, Arizona Blacks and Mojaves, from largest to the fewest number killed. That not counting the one sidewinder Damon killed. They're so darned small, he almost stepped on it. I worry about you being outside since you can't hear them rattle."

"Everyone wearing high top boots?"

"Even you are. I got you a pair of boots and had zippers installed. They are larger than your regular shoe size and when they were broken in you started wearing silk liners with heavyweight wool socks to fill the space created when they were broken in."

"Like my Laredos?"

"Same brand but not entirely; these are 12" high Crescents, not those short boots you bought at Howard and Phil's. I also have a pair in your regular size you've been breaking in wearing only the silk liners. We have a lightweight wool sock for those. You can get by with the larger size if you wear the silk liners, lightweight and heavyweight wool socks."

"I'll probably remember that when I put the boots on. Have you had me tested for Alzheimer's?"

"The results came back negative for Alzheimer's, Dementia and Parkinson's. Alzheimer's is just one of many forms of Dementia and the most common."

"So I'm not insane?"

"I didn't say that. I suppose you don't remember that I had another stent operation in the same location as the last 2 operations. I just don't understand it, my cholesterol is around 160."

"What's the ratio of your HDLs to your total cholesterol?"

"Four point six-four."

"That means that your LDLs are way over 100 and your HDLs are under 35. Triglycerides?"

"One seventy."

"My last test showed cholesterol at 110, triglycerides at 67, HDLs at 50, calculated LDLs at 47 with a ratio of 2.2 (cholesterol to HDLs) and cholesterol, Non-HDL, of 60. My plasma no longer looks like milk due to triglycerides exceeding 600. I think my COPD will be what gets me in the end."

"Then, stop smoking."

"Nope."

For all my ills, I had a good chance of outliving my wife. My diabetes was 'sorta' regulated with a daily average in the 160s. I used the albuterol and atrovent seldomly. Yes, I got short of breath but a little deep breathing resolved that. My blood pressure registered high because how I measured it, not because it was actually high. On my last doctor visit it measured 105 over 60 with a pulse of 72. My weight bounced around between 132 and 138 meaning my Body Mass Index (BMI) was acceptable and in the range of 22.66 – 23.68. (Normal range is 18 – 25) My weight varied and it had, in the past, related to the amount of stress I was under with periods of low weight coming when stress was very high. Now it related to how much I ate and my salt intake.

From 2004 onwards my time was spent writing stories and posting them on various forums. Frugal's until 2006 and other places after. Sharon had handled our finances from 2005 onwards and I signed the line when required. My first firearms came out of the money she got for her Fen-Phen settlement and earlier gifts from my father. In a way my confusion over how things really were when compared to the way I thought they

were, was understandable. Remember the line from *Hotel California*? *You can check out, but you can never leave.* I had mentally checked out... but I was still here.

We had Morgan horses and mine was a gelding named Salina. There was about 75 acres of irrigated grass which now contained part of a 20' and 40' Conex. My mission in life these days was hunting rattlesnakes. Actually, that included all snakes because I couldn't hear the rattles and just shot every one I saw.

My fear of snakes, like many things, came out of my days at Edwards AFB. Before I got into drinking really bad, I read every book the library had on snakes. Until we moved to Arizona, I'd never seen a Mojave except on TV. They aren't all green either. Mojave type A had neurotoxic venom and Mojave type B (Mojave green) hemotoxic. CroFab antivenin covered all North American pit vipers. It comes 2 vials per box at \$\$\$\$ per box. We didn't stock antivenin; the local hospitals did. You get a bad bite and you'll be in ICU for at least 4-5 days and they may have to inject 18 or more vials of CroFab. CroFab is derived from injecting sheep with the Venom of the Eastern Diamondback, Western Diamondback, Cottonmouth and Mojave (A) thus the qualifier Ovine.

The easiest solution was to buy snake gaiters or chaps. The gaiters were basically knee high while the chaps extended up to your hip. Some bites were dry while others might be a full dose of Western Diamondback venom. Even the small sidewinder could deliver a pretty good dose, no bigger than it was. Couple that with the fact that we'd killed snakes on our 5 acres and the fact that we had a good crop of grass in the pasture with lots of places for rattlers to hide. The result being that on a good week, I'd kill 2-3 snakes. Unfortunately, keeping the snake population down increased the rodent population.

Bubonic Plague still exists in the wild in the US. Bubonic plague is a zoonotic disease, circulating mainly in fleas on small rodents, and is one of three types of bacterial infections caused by *Yersinia pestis*, that belongs to the family Enterobacteriaceae. Without treatment, the bubonic plague kills about two thirds of infected humans within four days. It's a long way from Palmdale to the Agua Fria National Monument; that said, most of the cases of the Plague in the US are reported in the Southwestern states.

In 2002, a couple from New Mexico was diagnosed while vacationing in New York City. In 2010 a case was reported in Oregon. In 2012, cases were reported in Oregon and Colorado, including a 7-year-old girl who contracted Bubonic plague while camping in southwest Colorado. In July 2013, following routine testing in and near Los Angeles, health officials publicly confirmed that a squirrel had tested positive with bubonic plague in the Angeles National Forest near Wrightwood (very close to Palmdale). As a precaution, portions of the area have been closed to camping. However, pedestrian traffic through the area continues. Hikers are advised to use insect repellent and ensure that any pets they may bring wear a flea collar.

What does this have to do with a HEMP attack against the US? They're totally unrelated. China had enough troops prepositioned to invade Taiwan, Korea and Japan. Phoe-

nix, Flagstaff and Tucson were replacing electrical grid equipment as fast as it could be delivered. When the attack came, Palo Verde had one unit down for minor repairs and was in the process of shutting down a second unit in conjunction with bringing the shut-down unit back online. It serves the Phoenix-Scottsdale, Tucson, Los Angeles, and San Diego metropolitan areas. The Cholla Power plant could produce electricity after minor repairs. And, San Onofre was shut down in 2013 and some assets sold off in 2014.

Based on the map, I presumed that California, was not *directly* affected by the HEMP. It was experiencing an energy crunch worse than the one that got Gray Davis recalled. If an earthquake shutdown Diablo Canyon, the only electricity California would have would be that generated by their wind turbines. And, did they ever have wind turbines. When Arnold Schwarzenegger became Governor on November 17, 2003, California generated about 2,025 megawatts of electricity from wind power. A year after Governor Moonbeam was elected again; California was producing about 5,549 megawatts of electricity from wind power.

I assumed that unlike other places affected by the HEMP, California could keep building. There were 6 wind farms when we moved to Agua Fria: Shiloh Wind Power Plant, Altamont Pass Wind Farm, Tehachapi Pass Wind Farm, Alta Wind Energy Center (also in Tehachapi Pass), San Geronimo Pass Wind Farm and Ocotillo Wind Energy Project.

Except, I was overlooking something, what could that be? After sleeping on the subject, it came to me. California imported a lot of electrical energy from places within the HEMP region. If Jerry could make a jeep falter on I-80 on a trip from Reno to Winnemucca due to a nuke exploding in Donner Pass due to railroad tracks (*The X Factor*), then all those lines from Palo Verde would transmit the pulse to much of California and take out those Hi Voltage transformers.

Our wind turbines didn't really match those in scale and we had protection built in. Thyristors were installed in all the power feeds, stopping EMPs. They were usually installed in conjunction with Hi Voltage transformers to provide protection due to voltage/current spikes. Whoa... an EMP is an induced voltage/current spike. So did California lose its Hi Voltage transformers or not? We're not going there to find out.

In my dream, I wanted submarine batteries and now, after she woke me up, we have 2 banks? One bank of 24 produces '48' volts, nominal; with a 48 volt system, (24 cells), $4 \times 45 \text{ days} = 180 \text{ days} = 6 \text{ months}$. When current is drawn from batteries at 200 amps or less, kilowatt hour ratings are increased 20-30%. This is due to the lower heating effect of the acid. Operating batteries at room temperature increases the efficiency still more. Using the electrolyte pumping system built into each cell increases the efficiency still more. This prevents acid from settling out, by pumping acid from the bottom of the cell to the top. These batteries were made by Exide, one of the leaders of battery manufacturing.

Two banks of fully charged batteries would produce $2 \times 180 \text{ days} = 360 \text{ days}$, ~ 1 year. How much did Shirley leave her? Everything was paid for, she said. Assuming... there I

go again... 48 batteries could be had at \$2,500 each, she spent \$120,000 on batteries? Plus the inverters/charge controllers, 2 wind turbines and a generator with a 30,000 gallon propane tank and recently a second filled 30,000 gallon tank.

Shirley worked for Banker's Life (Principal) from when she graduated high school until she retired with full retirement at age 55 or 60. She was involved with investments during her later years and she was sharp as a tack. Beyond that, Shirley was frugal before they even invented the word. She'd been investing her savings since year 1 (1958) and never was short of money. She might not have it in her checking account, but she had it somewhere.

Charlene had been nearly that frugal until they retired and moved from Guam to California. Her husband Andy had to have a few status symbols, like a 42" flat screen before the price dropped, but he spent a lot of money on model trains; and, I mean a lot. One day a deep vein thrombosis let loose and killed him with a pulmonary embolism. Her surviving son and his significant other moved in and she ended up filing bankruptcy. She then moved back to Des Moines where she lived until she too, died.

I'm sure several questions have been raised by this latter account about my sons and their families. For example, we had a HEMP attack and Derek is working in Phoenix? With no electricity? The first Hi Voltage transformers replaced had been those supplying Phoenix-Scottsdale and Cholla which fed Flagstaff and points south. Which the commercial power became available; we flipped the switch and reconnected to the grid, selling electricity again. They sure don't pay much.

Dream a Little Dream of Me – Chapter 14

Derek always had 4 firearms available. The first was 'baby', the name he'd given to my M1A Loaded. The second was the 590A1 with a new barrel band so he could use an OKC-3S with the sling attached. The third was the PT1911B that he'd strawman purchased for me in 2006 and I eventually got in 2008. The fourth and final was the Sauer model 38H after a gunsmith had smoothed the action and eliminated feeding problems.

He gave us back the remaining rounds of 8-pellet I'd purchased and I gave him Brenneke 3" Black Magic 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz slugs and 3" Remington 15-pellet 00 and 41-pellet #4 buckshot. We had installed a Surefire suppressor with muzzle brake adapter, Harris 9-13" bipod, a Sadlak mount and Leupold Mk IV ER/T 4.5-14x50mm (30mm) M1 Front Focal riflescope. He didn't have night vision for the rifle. Personally, I wouldn't want to be his target if he was within 1,000 meters using 168gr Black Hills BTHP match. He did better with my old Loaded than we could do with our M21s.

Keep in mind that the Loaded M1A had GI Match Grade non-hooded Aperture .0520, adjustable, one-half minute for windage and one minute for elevation sights and the National Match had one-half minute for both windage and elevation sights. The rifle I gave Derek may well have been the most accurate Loaded M1A Springfield Armory, Inc. ever assembled. Whether it was, or not, was irrelevant, most of the accuracy comes from the skill of the shooter. A group at 500 yards that ran 0.8MOA was awfully good shooting using surplus ammo. Conversely, I was deadly shooting rattlesnakes with the Vaquero using shot shells at about 6' and sometimes further when I was on Salina. It didn't like rattlesnakes and wasn't deaf. When Salina froze, I went for my Vaquero; and then, looked until I found the snake.

In *Arizona Black*, my principal character first avoided an Arizona Black Rattler only to be bitten by one later. Cottonmouths and Copperheads don't rattle, what was it about the Arizona Black Rattlesnake that caused them not to give warning? Was it literary license or did rattlesnakes sometimes not rattle?





Arizona Black Rattlesnakes don't all look alike. I had pictures on my computer of all the Arizona venomous snakes and where Snakes of Arizona had several pictures of the same subspecies. I also had a note that said: *Some adult Arizona black rattlesnakes can change color relatively quickly; an ability shared not only with chameleons but also with other snakes such as some species in the genus Tropicodphis. Further research is needed to determine the mechanism and stimuli for this phenomenon in this rattlesnake.* Tropicodphis is the common name wood snake or West Indian wood snake, a boa.

I speculated that despite the fact that rattlesnakes were sensitive to ground vibrations, one could sneak up on the snake because of confusing vibrations from multiple people. The same theory would suggest that the rattles would be going a mile a minute to warn everyone off. On the other hand, did a rattlesnake rattle before striking its prey? That's counter intuitive, why warn your next meal? Conclusion, rattlesnake didn't rattle when they mistook a light step for a mouse, etc. Were barefoot children more susceptible to rattlesnake bites? A significant number of the patients on the TV show *Venom ER* starring Dr. Sean P. Bush were children and the most common were people who put their hands into places where snakes were hiding.

Does the name Jim Stafford ring a bell? What about his hit, *Spiders and Snakes*? Spent his final years in Branson, MO... died in 2008. Heard his song and adopted it as a personal motto. It was nice to have 80 acres to hunt rattlesnakes on. Loaded up on CCI .45 Colt shot shells; they came in 10 packs with lots of those plastic boxes in a case. Only #9 shot and it sometimes took more than one shot. Never pick up a dead rattlesnake because, even if they're dead, muscle reflex may result in you getting bit. It's especially true if you cut off their head with your Cold Steel 24" Latin machete. Stay away from the part with the fangs.

A little here and a little there and my memory was starting to come back. All those plans the FCC had for changing the Internet went by the wayside when the HEMP took down the net. And no faster than it was being brought back up, The FCC would have to wait 10-15 years before they could fix it so it didn't work. Just when something was working about as best as it could, the feds would fix it. Sort of like the M16 replacing the M14, if you know what I mean.

Since the 5.56 didn't have the range of the 7.62, Iraq and Afghanistan reversed that and the 7.62 was the hero of the hour. I think, I don't really know, that SEI was the principal supplier of the military for M14s and 7.62 rifles.

The US would need at least 2 more years minimum to get the power restored after the HEMP attack. Worse, since it was attributed to the failure of Chinese satellite, ergo an accident, there was question of how much China's share of the liability would be.

Our principal sources of income were Social Security and the Iowa trust fund. The arrangement with the trust fund was a set amount per month. My pension was about \$600 a month and she had her entire pension divided between federal and state withholding. Not that we had (m)any taxes until the government gets its act together.

We were eventually visited by the Arizona National Guard, supposedly taking a census. We were naturally, all wearing Vaqueros and carrying Marlin 1894s. The SFC got out of the Hummer and asked permission to enter our property.

"Why do you need to do that Sergeant, looking for anything in particular?"

"We're just doing a census. That includes a nose count. Is that a problem?"

“If that all you want, no, it isn’t a problem.”

“What’s with that berm?”

“It’s protecting the used CONEX we bought for storage.”

“Is that a fuel tanker?”

“As a matter of fact, it’s a used military 3,000 tanker we picked up. We use it to store diesel. Are you going to inventory us or our assets?”

“Your people, of course. Are you all armed?”

“We have more guns on us that you can see. The only 9mmP we have are Browning Hi-Powers in shoulder holsters but we do have Walther PPKs in ankle holsters.”

“Expecting trouble?”

“Every day since October, 1962.”

“The Cuban Missile Crisis?”

“Yep. I was in the Air Force stationed at Edwards Air Force Base. The day started out normal until JFK got on the radio with an audio only presentation of his TV address. When we got back to the main base that night, there were 12 B-47s with 2 nukes apiece sitting in a shotgun area at the end of the flight line.”

“And, as a result, you’re a survivalist?”

“Nah, that came into full practice after 9/11. Excluding a bomb shelter, we were full prepared by Christmas 2006.”

“Who is living here now?”

“Me, Gary D. Ott, age 72, my wife, Sharon J. Ott, age 68, my oldest son, Damon P. Ott, age 45, His girlfriend Pam, don’t know her last name or age, his 2 sons, Aaron and Eric, don’t know their ages, my younger son Derek S. Ott, age 42, his four children, Derek Jr., Elizabeth, Joshua and Thomas. Temporary residents include Sharon’s daughter, Lorrie R. Gibbs, age 48, our daughter Amy M. Moon and her 2 children, Audrey and Udell, don’t know their ages, but teenagers. They live in Palmdale, California and come east to visit when they can.”

“Who can fill in the blanks?”

“Damon and Pam are around, somewhere. He can give you details on his kids. My wife should be able to fill in any other blanks, except for Derek Jr. I think Derek Jr. is 21. Derek Sr. is retired Army National Guard and saw service in Korea, Kosovo, Iraq and the Ukraine. Jr. only saw service in the Ukraine, but no actual combat.”

“Do you know you Derek Sr.’s MOS?”

“He was in Abrams tanks the first 12 years until he went to Iraq where he was an MP pulling convoy escort duties. When he returned, he transferred to a different National Guard unit. That’s about all I know (or, am willing to tell you). My oldest son was an ET in the Navy and was booted on a section 8. He ended up with a 100% service connected disability.”

“Do you know what the disability is?”

“He’s crazy (bi-polar).”

“Do you know Derek Jr.’s MOS?”

“Nope, why?”

“We need to contact him and get him to complete his enlistment.”

“Good luck... we don’t see much of him and I have no idea where he hangs out (he lives with his Dad in Phoenix).” (What is a pathological liar?).

◦

In psychiatry, pseudologia fantastica, also called mythomania, compulsive lying or pathological lying, is a behavior of habitual or compulsive lying. It was first described in the medical literature in 1891 by Anton Delbrueck. Although it is a controversial topic, pathological lying has been defined as “falsification entirely disproportionate to any discernible end in view, may be extensive and very complicated, and may manifest over a period of years or even a lifetime”. The individual may be aware they are lying, or may believe they are telling the truth, being unaware that they are relating fantasies.

Doesn’t apply, I was intentionally lying to protect my family and knew the answers to most of his questions except those relating to ages.

◦

After cornering Damon and Pam, he interrogated Sharon. In accordance with a pre-arranged family agreement, Damon and Pam knew ‘nothing’ about Derek’s family and about all Sharon would tell him were the dates of birth for Lorrie, Amy, Audrey and Udell. What they don’t know can’t hurt you. What they speculate can hurt you and we started carrying M1As, the Browning Hi-Powers and PT1911Bs. I had to resort to my

golf cart to get around and loaded #6 shot in my 590A1 while I was hunting rattlesnakes. What hobby did you begin when you entered retirement and had excess time on your hands? I wrote for a while; until I ran out of stories to tell. Then I woke up and found myself living in Arizona with plenty of rattlesnakes to hunt.

Our 80 acres was $\frac{1}{2}$ mile deep and $\frac{1}{4}$ mile wide, allowing us to have an 800 meter range the long way and a 900 meter range on the diagonal. The berm in the far corner was built on a diagonal to permit firing from either firing position. We measured out a 2 kilometer diagonal range from the 800 meter firing range into the National Monument to use for the .50 caliber rifles.

This brings me back to something I brought up earlier, the shooter vs. the firearm. 'Baby' wasn't supposed to be capable of shooting a 4" group at 500 yards, even using match ammo, let alone South African surplus. The Tac-50 was guaranteed by McMillan to shoot 0.5MOA at any range. So, it would shoot a 5" group at 1,000 meters or a 10" group at 2,000 meters, or close. Actually, we were talking about a true MOA which equals 1.047" at 100 yards. Therefore, the group size would be $10 \times 1.047 = 10.47$ ".

The Metric System counterpart of the MOA is the MilRad, being equal to one 1000th of the target range, laid out on a circle that has the observer as center and the target range as radius. The number of MilRads on a full such circle therefore always is equal to $2 \times \pi \times 1000$, regardless the target range. Therefore 1 MOA = 0.2908 MilRad. This means that an object which spans 1 MilRad on the reticle is at a range that is in meters equal to the object's size in millimeters (e.g. an object of 100 mm @ 1 Milrad is 100 meters away). So there is no conversion factor required, contrary to the MOA system. The markings on a reticle that mark MilRads are called MilDots. Such reticle is called a Mil-Dot Reticle.

At 1,000 meters, rifle would group at $1,000 \times 2.908 \text{cm}$. A centimeter is 0.01 meter so the result should be 29.08cm at 1,000 meters or about 11.44882". We adapted to using the metric system. Man, was that a witch. But our scopes all had MilDot reticles and it was easier to learn than we thought. The younger generations had no trouble at all. I didn't even know that MilDot was a metric measurement.

That has scopes out of the way; I'd never used scopes because my first experience was a Weaver K-4 that I couldn't establish the correct eye relief for and ended up selling the rifle and scope. Derek sat me down and explained things and after reading to literature on the scopes helped to set the eye relief on the Tac-50 and M21. Once he explained the windage, elevation and so forth the rifles worked like they should. I could get about $1\frac{1}{2}$ MOA from the Tac-50 at 1,500 meters and close to $1\frac{1}{4}$ MOA from the M21 at 800 meters.

He said I was anticipating the recoil on the Tac-50 (flinching) and he'd have to see what he could do to get me over the flinch. I knew it could be done because Thomas had helped others overcome their flinching in *Normal*.

Amy, on the other hand, wasn't as good with the large Taurus. She had problems bringing the pistol out of recoil for a second shot and found she was anticipating the recoil too much and "nose diving" the muzzle towards the ground. Thomas worked with her to place single shots on target and to slow her rate of fire. She listened carefully and slowed her rate of fire to a level where her second round would impact near the first. It took sometimes up to two seconds for her to fire the second shot, but her accuracy was improving.

Yes, my memory was improving, and no, I still confused the dream with my memories. That changed the second time the Arizona National Guard showed up. They wanted our solar panels and associated equipment, including the 2 25KW wind turbines.

"Sorry Lieutenant, that isn't going to happen."

"I have an Executive Order that says it is."

"The fifth amendment provides that: No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

"The fourteenth amendment provides that:

Section 1. All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Section 2. Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each State, excluding Indians not taxed. But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of electors for President and Vice President of the United States, Representatives in Congress, the Executive and Judicial officers of a State, or the members of the Legislature thereof, is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such State, being twenty-one years of age, and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens twenty-one years of age in such State.

Section 3. No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may, by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.

Section 4. The validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law, including debts incurred for payment of pensions and bounties for services in suppressing insurrection or rebellion, shall not be questioned. But neither the United States nor any State shall assume or pay any debt or obligation incurred in aid of insurrection or rebellion against the United States, or any claim for the loss or emancipation of any slave; but all such debts, obligations and claims shall be held illegal and void.

Section 5. The Congress shall have power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

“You can take your orders and shove them where the sun doesn’t shine.”

“Now see here...”

He paused when he heard pumps being pumped, bolt releases being released and the actions of the M1As being cycled.

“What was that?”

“First off, the entire family is home today and second off, the sounds were pumps being pumped, bolt releases being released and the actions of the M1As being cycled.

“You will only get our guns from our cold dead hands.”

“Lieutenant, if I may be permitted a question?”

“Go ahead Sergeant.”

“How long Mr. Ott?”

“February 24, 1964. Patron since 2006.”

“Crew served weapons?”

“Three; an M2HB, an Mk 19 Mod 3 and an M240B.”

“Select fire weapons.”

“Not quite enough to go around but they all have Enhanced Lowers.”

“Sniper rifles?”

“Four. Two M21s and two Tac-50s. We’re also well supplied with M1A Loaded models.”

“Explain that Sergeant.”

“Yes sir. If we don’t leave immediately, we won’t be leaving at all. They have 3 machine guns, 4 sniper rifles, Additional near sniper grade rifles and an undetermined number of select fire weapons. In my opinion, if they have those they’re probably well supplied with dangerous devices like hand grenades, anti-tank rockets and possibly 40mm grenades.”

“What’s an enhanced lower?”

“You know about the M4 Commando Enhanced some of the people have with semi-auto, 3 round burst and full auto? The lower receiver defines the Enhanced feature. They are interchangeable the A1 and A2 lower together with any gas piston upper, like the H&K and many other gas piston uppers. They may be short on people, but they’re not short on weapons and we’re outnumbered.”

The Lieutenant’s hand was hovering over his M9. When he moved to withdraw it from its holster, a shot rang out, hitting right between the eyes.

“Self-defense, Sergeant, he was going for his M9.”

“I noticed. Which of you shot him?”

“Damned if I know, I was looking at him, watching him going for his holster.”

“Get everyone together with their firearms so we can check them.”

I waived my hands to get everyone’s attention and told them to bring their firearms which obviously excluded the machine guns and select fire long guns. I noticed that Derek was carrying one of the new Loaded M1As. After checking each firearm the Sergeant told the troops to stand down.”

“The shot didn’t come from any of these firearms. Bring out your Marlins and Single action revolvers.”

“Put up your military firearms and bring out all the cowboys guns.”

“These are clean too. Is that all of the firearms?”

“Yep.”

“You said you had 4 select fire firearms and 3 machine guns.”

“Derek, take the Sergeant on a tour and show him those weapons, the purchase receipts and tax stamps.”

“I guess you’re in the clear; none of the weapons have been fired.”

“Good, now get off my property in light of the 5th and 14th amendments.”

“Where did you hide baby?”

“Under some hay in the loft.”

“You’d better get it cleaned up and put away.”

Dream a Little Dream of Me – Chapter 15

“Damon, I could use some help here.”

“What are you trying to do?”

“Enclose the sides of my golf cart with metal doors. I need your help to fabricate them and Aaron’s help to weld the hinges on.”

“Why?”

“The Western Diamondback is the second largest rattlesnake in the US. Rare specimens have been reported to approach 7 feet. Plus they have long fangs and large venom sacs and in the southwest, count for the majority of venomous snake bites. When I was on Salina, it would shy before getting close to a diamondback; my golf cart doesn’t. So, I need sheet metal doors that will prevent them from picking up my body heat. They’re aggressive and usually don’t back down. Any more questions?”

“How thick of plate?”

“One eighth inch, aluminum or steel... whatever you can find. We’ll put the hinges on the front like car doors and come up with something to hold them closed; maybe a bungee cord.”

He measured the golf cart and came up with 1/8” aluminum sheeting, cut to fit the openings, and piano hinges. After mounting the hinges on the doors with pop rivets, he marked the golf cart for the hinge edge. Next, he riveted the hinges to the golf cart. There was a lip with a hole at the upper back of the doors and the doors were held closed by a medium weight bungee cord. He explained that he had a heavier weight bungee cords as well as a lighter weight bungee cords and I should choose which I could stretch easily. I stuck with medium weight because I could manage, barely, to stretch it to hold the doors closed.

“Is that satisfactory?”

“It’s exactly what I wanted, thank you.”

“If the Western Diamondback is second, what’s first?”

“What’s on second, who is on first! The Eastern Diamondback is first; however I think the Mojave in this area may be the most dangerous because it’s the Mojave A venom and the slightly less dangerous Mojave B venom is found south of Phoenix. The Mojave with B venom is generally called the Mojave Green. Mojave A, generally called the Mojave includes a neurotoxic component. CroFab, the anti-venom is made from Eastern Diamondback, Western Diamondback, Cottonmouth and Mojave A venom. Just don’t get bit because CroFab is very expensive and you end up in ICU for several days. The

rate for ICUs is an hourly rate, not a day rate and people have been bankrupted getting treatment for a snake bite. The coral snake generally found in southern Arizona is an entirely different anti-venom because coral snake venom is elapid, ergo, cobra. The last I recall production of the anti-venom in the US stopped. The USFDA granted 2 extensions to the expiration dates of the last anti-venom. I would guess that you could only find it at the Miami-Dade venom bank if any still exists.

“I read that it is manufactured overseas but hasn’t been approved for importation by the USFDA. The secret to not getting bit by a coral snake is to not handle it and wear leather work gloves because of the type of fangs the coral snake has, type 3. The cobra has type 2 or fixed fangs and the vipers have type one or hinged fangs.”

“What type 3 fangs and why Miami Dade?”

“Type 3 are at the back of the mouth and a short tooth with a groove on top. Miami Dade has the largest anti-venom bank in the US.”

“What do they have?”

“Let me check my computer. Okay, here you go.”

Anti-venom List

Crofab (Crotalidae Polyvalent Immune Fab)

- Crotalus atrox
- Crotalus adamanteus
- Crotalus scutulatus
- Agkistrodon piscivorus

USA Polyvalent

- Crotalus adamanteus (Eastern diamond rattlesnake)
- Crotalus atrox (Western diamond rattlesnake)
- Crotalus durissus terrificus (Tropical rattlesnake, Cascabel)
 - Bothrops atrox (“Fer-de-lance”)
- Crotalids (pit vipers, native to North, Central, and South America)
 - Crotalus, Sistrurus (Copperhead)
 - Agkistrodon (Cottonmouth moccasin)
 - Agkistrodon Halys (Korea & Japan)
 - Bothrops (The tropical rattler)
- Crotalus durissus (and similar species)
 - Agkistrodon Bilineatus (Cantil)
- Lachesis mutus (Bushmaster) of South and Central America

North American (USA) Coral Snake Antivenom

- Micrurus fulvius fulvius (Eastern Coral Snake)

- *Micrurus fulvius tenere* (Texas Coral Snake)

Merck Black Widow

- *Latrodectus mactans* (Black Widow)

Bioclon Coral Snake

- *Micrurus fulvius fulvius*

Bioclon Antivipmyn

Crotalus

- Rattlesnake
- Hognose viper
 - Tziripa
- Saye Cascabel
- Cascabel tropical
 - Shunu
 - Tzab-can

Bothrops

- Caissaca
- Nauyaca
- Cuatro Narices
- Barba amarilla
 - Terciopelo
 - Equis
 - Mapana
 - Jararaca
 - Toboba
- Cola de hueso
- Vibora de arbol
 - Vibora verde
 - Nauyaca real
- Nauyaca de frio
- Nauyaca chatilla
 - Palanca
 - Palanca lora
 - Palanca loca
- Vibora sorda
 - Tepoch
- Cornezuelo
- Nascacuati
 - Torito
 - Cac-can

Agkistrodon

- Cantil
- Copperhead
- Cottonmouth
 - Zolcuate
 - Moccasin
- Cantil de agua
 - Castellana
 - Cmcoatl
 - Metapil
- Puchucuate
 - Volpoch

Sistrurus

- Massasauga
- Pygmy rattlesnake
- Cascabel de neve placas

Bioclon Scorpion

Brazilian Arachnid

- Tityus
- Phoneutria (“aranha-armadeira”)
- Locsoceles (“aranha-marrom”)

Brazilian Coral

- Micrurus sp.

Brazilian Crotalus

- Bothrops
- Crotalus

Brazilian Laquetico

- Bothrops
- Lachesis

Costa Rican Coral

- Micrurus (South American)
 - Micrurus nigrocintus
 - Micrurus fulvius
 - Micrurus carinicaudus

Costa Rican Polyvalent

- Bothrops atrox
- Bothrops brazili
- Bothrops pictus

- Bothrops barnetti
- Bothrops hyoprora

European Viper

- Vipera ammodytes
 - Vipera aspis
 - Vipera berus
 - Vipera labetina
- Vipera xanthina
 - Vipera ursinii

France Favirept

- Bitis arietans
 - Echis leucogaster
 - Naja haje
 - Naja nigricollis
 - Cerastes cerastes
 - Macrovipera deserti
- France Scorpion
- Androctonus australis hector
 - Leiurus quinquestriatus
 - Buthus occitanus mardochei

South African Boomslang

- Dispholidus typus (boomslang tree snake)

South African Polyvalent (Southern and Central African species)

- Rinkhals
- Mambas
- Cobras
- Vipers (adders)
 - Bitis
- Dendroaspis
- Hemachatus
 - Naja

Saw Scaled Viper (Echis)

- Echis Carinatus/ocellatus
 - Echis coloratus
- 2 Cerastes species

South African Scorpion

- Parabuthus Species

CSL Australian Brown Snake

- Pseudonaja

- Eastern Brown Snake
 - Dugite
- Gwardar (Western Brown Snake)

CSL Australian Polyvalent

- King brown snake (*Pseudechis australis*)
 - Tiger snake (*Notechis scutatus*)
 - Brown snake (*Pseudonaja textilis*)
- Death Adder (*Acanthopis antarcticus*)
 - Taipan (*Oxyuranus scutellatus*)

CSL Stonefish

- Stonefish (*Synanceia trachynis*)

CSL Taipan

CSL Tiger Snake

- Tiger Snake (*Notechis scutatus*)

Banded Krait

Cobra

- King Cobra
- Banded Krait
- Russell's Viper
- Malayan Pit Viper
- Green Pit Viper

Green Pit Viper *Trimeresurus albolabris*

King Cobra

Russell's Viper

Malayan Pit Viper

Thai Cobra

Peru Anti Botropico Polyvalent

- *Bothrops atrox*
- *Bothrops brazili*
- *Bothrops pictus*
- *Bothrops barnetti*
- *Bothrops hyoprora*

Peru Anticrotalico Monovalent

- *Crotalus durissus terrificus* (Cascavel)

Peru Anti Lachesico Monovalent

India Antiserum Asian Polyvalent

- Cobra (*Naja Naja*)
- Common krait (*Bungarus caeruleus*)
 - Russell's viper (*Vipera russelli*)
- Saw scaled viper (*Echis carinatus*)

India Antiserum Africa Polyvalent

- *Bitis gabonica*
- *Bitis arietans*
- *Bitis nasicornis*
- *Dendroaspis jamesonii*
- *Dendroaspis polylepis*
- *Dendroaspis angusticeps*
 - *Echis carinatus*
 - *Naja nivea*
 - *Naja nigricollis*
 - *Naja annulifera*
 - *Naja melanoleuca*

Bioclon Tri Antivipmyn

- *Crotalus*
- Rattlesnake
- Hognose viper
 - Tziripa
- Saye Cascabel
- Cascabel tropical
 - Shunu
 - Tzab-can
 - Bothrops
 - Caissaca
 - Nauyaca
- Cuatro Narices
- Barba amarilla
 - Terciopelo
 - Equis
 - Mapana
 - Jararaca
 - Toboba
- Cola de hueso
- Vibora de arbol
 - Vibora verde
 - Nauyaca real

- Nauyaca de frio
- Nauyaca chatilla
 - Palanca
 - Palanca lora
 - Palanca loca
 - Vibora sorda
 - Tepoch
 - Nascacuati
 - Cornezuelo
 - Torito
 - Cac-can

Agkistrodon

- Cantil
- Copperhead
- Cottonmouth
 - Zolcuate
 - Moccasin
- Cantil de agua
 - Castellana
 - Cmcoatl
 - Metapil
- Puchucuate
 - Volpoch

Sistrurus

- Massasauga
- Pygmy rattlesnake
- Cascabel de neve placas

Lachesis

- Lora machaco
- Cascabel muda
 - Rieca
 - Verrugoso
- Sururucucu
 - Lorita
 - Patoco
- Patoquillo

“Vipers usually have (hinged) fangs in the front of their mouths, making it easier for them to inject the venom into their victims. Elapids, however, such as cobras and kraits are proteroglyphous – they possess hollow fangs that cannot be erected toward the front of their mouths, and cannot stab like a viper. They must actually bite the victim. The fangs of rear-fanged snakes such as the boomslang merely have a groove on the

posterior edge to channel venom into the wound. Don't get near the banded Krait whatever you do. A 10" juvenile killed Joe Slowinski in only a few hours. As the story goes:"

*I walked up as Joe's Burmese field assistant, U Htun Win, held out a snake bag. "I think it's a Dinodon," he was saying. Joe extended his right hand into the bag. When it reappeared, a pencil-thin, gray-banded snake swung from the base of his middle finger. "That's a f***ing krait," Joe said. He pulled off the snake and kneaded the bitten area, seemingly unmarked, with a fingernail.*

Other scientists have been known to cut off their finger at such a moment. Joe sat down to join the rest of us for breakfast at a long wooden school table, joking about his thick skin. It was 7 am on September 11, 2001.

*AFTER IT WAS OVER, we'd all wonder why Joe had reached into the snake bag with barely a glance inside. As with any pivotal moment, the exact words exchanged beforehand would be endlessly debated. Snakes of the genus Dinodon are harmless, but some are near-perfect mimics of the multibanded krait (*Bungarus multicinctus*), a cousin of the cobra and much more deadly. As field team leader, U Htun Win should have known the difference – but he told us he'd been bitten by the snake the day before and nothing had happened. Joe, however, was the authority. Possibly simple exhaustion brought his guard down; perhaps he failed to heed the uncertainty in U Htun Win's tentative identification.*

Following breakfast, around 7:30, Joe lay down. At 8 he noticed a tingling in the muscles of his hand, and asked Dong Lin to call the group together. By 8:15, two Burmese assistants started the run of eight miles to Naung-Mon, the nearest town with a radio. Joe calmly told us what would probably happen and what we should do. He described the effects of a slowly increasing paralysis, eventually requiring mouth-to-mouth respiration until he could be taken to a hospital. If he lived, the neurotoxins would work their way out of his system in 48 hours. He would be conscious, he told us, the whole time.

As the morning went on Joe had to reach up to open his eyelids. His breathing grew raspy; his voice was reduced to a slur. In time he could only write messages: "Please support my head, it's hard for me." "If I vomit, it could be bad." "Can I lean back a little?" By noon he could no longer breathe on his own. "Blow harder," he wrote. In his final message, minutes later, Joe spelled out "let me die." We won't let that happen," Guin Wogan said. "Kick butt, Joe," I added.

At 3 pm our runners returned alone, and told us the military had requested an update before they would send an air rescue. Two fresh assistants were sent back, again insisting that a helicopter be sent. By evening the weather turned from the best we'd seen in a week on the trail to a renewed downpour; low clouds would impede the rescue again the next day. That night soldiers arrived on foot with an ancient field radio and a young Burmese doctor with two nurses and a little equipment, including an old respirator no one could get to work.

Throughout that long night, we all helped out as we could, but much of the time was spent in simple exhausted witness. From time to time, Dong would put his arm around various members of the group and say, "I love you." In one long moment of vertigo, as someone who's had his own close calls with snakes, I looked at Joe in the torchlight and saw how alike we were in build, complexion, even our features, and I felt I was somehow watching myself die. Looking at Dong, Guin, and U Htun Win standing silently nearby, I wondered if they felt something similar.

By 3 am Joe could no longer signal us except with his big toe. His final communication occurred when ornithology assistant Maureen Flannery, whose strength had been keeping us all going, asked if she and Guin could stop doing mouth-to-mouth and let the guys take over. Joe's toe signals indicated a preference for the women.

During the 26 stifling, sandfly-infested hours that the artificial respiration continued, four airliners plowed into their final destinations in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania. The only one of us who knew was David Catania, a Cal Academy ichthyologist so unobtrusive I often forgot he was there. Dave had listened to his shortwave radio after collapsing briefly in his tent late in the night. Keeping the news to himself, he came out and gave Joe mouth-to-mouth for hours, his face showering sweat. He refused to let anyone else take over, even long after Joe's heart had stopped.

At 12:25 pm on September 12, the doctor told us Joe's pulse was gone. We began three hours of CPR, in anticipation of a rescue helicopter that was never able to land.

Elapsed time from bite until death: 29 hours, 25 minutes from a juvenile banded krait.

"Just make sure you look on my list of common names to get the correct scientific name."

"What good will that do?"

"If you can't contact Miami Dade, you will at least know what killed me. If you can, they can probably fly it here with an F/A18 Super Hornet."

Dream a Little Dream of Me – Chapter 16

“One final thing; be careful what you wish for, God has sense of humor and He may just fulfil your wish.”

No, I didn't wish to be bitten by a venomous snake, that would have been just plain dumb. Especially since the species I killed most often was Western Diamondbacks. To avoid a dead snake biting anyone by reflex, Derek picked up a set of 60" snake tongs down in Phoenix. When I shot a snake, I used the tongs to pick it up right behind the head and dropped it in a cardboard box that I unfolded and interlocked the bottom flaps. I left the box sit right where it was with the top open and the next day would check the box. If the snake was in the same position, I'd put on heavy leather gloves and interlock the top flaps.

Not admitting to being chicken or anything... but the following day, I'd take the ATV and trailer and check the boxes I'd closed the day before. If they rattled, they got another 6 rounds of shot and if they didn't, I put on the gloves and loaded the box on the trailer. There were quite a few boxes stacked over by the fence.

That's how it remained for a while until the boxes began to stink. It would have happened sooner except for the low humidity. The word came down to haul all the boxes to the dump. I wasn't about to touch those boxes so it had to wait for the weekend and they were loaded up and hauled... somewhere. I didn't ask and he didn't say. Since it was a weekend project, you know who he was, right?

About 3 weeks later, I was out walking the pasture, wearing my gaiters but not the waist length set. Zap, a western diamondback got me just above the knee. I filled it full of shot and got on the CB, telling anyone listening I was bitten by a western diamondback. Then, I passed out. I came to in one of the local hospitals, hopefully Prescott. I had tubes running to both arms and my right leg was bare, with black lines on it indicating the advance of the diamondback venom.

“How many vials?”

“Twelve. We're having 12 more brought in.”

“Did I get that big of a dose?”

“So it would seem. What were you doing walking out in that field?”

“Hunting rattlesnakes.”

“You found a large western diamondback. I understand you also have waist length chaps; why weren't you wearing those?”

“Too hot.”

“You should be ready to be released in 5 days. I suggested that you wear the chaps if you go out there again.”

“So, 6 days in ICU?”

“I’d say so.”

“Can we afford this?”

“Medicare will cover 80%. You’ll have to cover the other 20%.”

“I’ll have the wife call Iowa if someone can give her an estimated figure to give to the bank.”

Iowa said that it would have to go to the trust committee, to be discussed and decided. Apparently no one had read the will recently, it specifically provided for my health, if not for my welfare. Sharon had been doing pretty well on my welfare.

That venom destroyed a fair amount muscle and skin. The doctor suggested a skin graft and I asked if it was mandatory. He said, “No but it will leave ugly scar.”

“No problem, my pants will hide it and I’ll be sure to wear the chaps.”

“You mean when you’re able to walk, don’t you? You lost a large amount of muscle. There are four posterior thigh muscles and trust me when I say that you’ll probably need physical therapy due to the amount of muscle loss.”

When I started muttering (cussing), he shook his head and left. I got by with a total of 16 vials and they didn’t have to fly them in or anything... they borrowed them from the other hospital and replaced them when the 12 came in. For some strange reason they moved me out ICU and into Critical Care. It was marginally cheaper, but not cheap.

That physical therapy began not long after the wound healed. The only way I could see the wound was with a hand mirror and the doctor understated how ugly the bite area ended up being. Scar tissue only has so much stretch and the physical therapy lasted months. Of course, it was my own damned fault because I had chaps that I wasn’t wearing and the enclosed golf cart that I wasn’t riding on. So soon we get old and so late we get schmart.

Sorry to disappoint you, but we didn’t have a GTW. And China paid the damages by re-tuning our cash and Treasury Securities to us. With state of our economy, they were practically worthless and I bet they were laughing so hard, they couldn’t stand up. Derek was under consideration at ASU for an Associate Professor position. That’s tenured and pays more. A full Professor was a department head and pays a whole lot more and every Associate is considered if a Professor position opens.

The History Department had several sub-departments, one for each History discipline, headed by a Professor. The Chair of the History Department was a Distinguished Professor or Endowed chair, as I understand it. I can't say for certain because we really didn't talk about his work very much. Derek and DJ came up to the place every weekend. I had a job once I was able to get around, feeding the horses; when I couldn't get Damon or one of the boys to do it. And no better than I was getting around, the sympathy card played fairly well.

From that point forward, I wore my chaps and used the golf cart rather than riding Salina or walking. You know, I honestly believe that bad things happened in threes so I was bound and determined to maintain a 60 month supply of LTS for 15 people and a 1 year supply of STS foods for the same number of people, 15, because one never knew from day to day whether Lorrie had a new significant other. Damon, his 2 boys and Pam were 4. Sharon I bought the total to 6. Derek and his 4 brought the total to 9 and Lorrie brought it to either 10 or 11 and Amy, Audrey and Udell brought us up to a final tally of 14. Not that I expected Amy to have a significant other, but why risk it?

Two things for certain came out of Sharon's and my discussion about increasing the PPE, STS and LTS. We weren't buying any additional firearms. Damon and Derek both had a 'basic' set and Derek had extra. She placed an additional order with Walton and added a few extras, 2 hot chocolate in the 50 pound bags, cases of #10 cans of freeze dried beef, boneless chicken, pork and turkey. Emergency Essentials supplied Mountain House #10 cans and 2 serving pouches. Nitro-Pak had Hungry Man MREs, for a change. The used 40' Conex was full.

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I was getting around better, using my HurryCane around the house and golf cart outside. The news had become boring and I didn't read any article that didn't grab my attention. That changed abruptly when I caught the following story:

Earth's Magnetic Field Is Weakening 10 Times Faster Now

Earth's magnetic field, which protects the planet from huge blasts of deadly solar radiation, has been weakening over the past six months, according to data collected by a European Space Agency (ESA) satellite array called Swarm.

The biggest weak spots in the magnetic field – which extends 370,000 miles (600,000 kilometers) above the planet's surface – have sprung up over the Western Hemisphere, while the field has strengthened over areas like the southern Indian Ocean, according to the magnetometers onboard the Swarm satellites – three separate satellites floating in tandem.

The scientists who conducted the study are still unsure why the magnetic field is weakening, but one likely reason is that Earth's magnetic poles are getting ready to flip, said

Rune Floberghagen, the ESA's Swarm mission manager. In fact, the data suggest magnetic north is moving toward Siberia.

"Such a flip is not instantaneous, but would take many hundreds if not a few thousand years," Floberghagen told Live Science. "They have happened many times in the past."

Scientists already know that magnetic north shifts. Once every few hundred thousand years the magnetic poles flip so that a compass would point south instead of north. While changes in magnetic field strength are part of this normal flipping cycle, data from Swarm have shown the field is starting to weaken faster than in the past. Previously, researchers estimated the field was weakening about 5 percent per century, but the new data revealed the field is actually weakening at 5 percent per decade, or 10 times faster than thought. As such, rather than the full flip occurring in about 2,000 years, as was predicted, the new data suggest it could happen sooner.

Floberghagen hopes that more data from Swarm will shed light on why the field is weakening faster now.

Still, there is no evidence that a weakened magnetic field would result in a doomsday for Earth. During past polarity flips there were no mass extinctions or evidence of radiation damage. Researchers think power grids and communication systems would be most at risk.

Earth's magnetic field acts like a giant invisible bubble that shields the planet from the dangerous cosmic radiation spewing from the sun in the form of solar winds. The field exists because Earth has a giant ball of iron at its core surrounded by an outer layer of molten metal. Changes in the core's temperature and Earth's rotation boil and swirl the liquid metal around in the outer core, creating magnetic field lines.

The movement of the molten metal is why some areas of the magnetic field strengthen while others weaken, Floberghagen said. When the boiling in one area of the outer core slows down, fewer currents of charged particles are released, and the magnetic field over the surface weakens. [Flo-berg-hagen]

"The flow of the liquid outer core almost pulls the magnetic field around with it," Floberghagen said. "So, a field weakening over the American continent would mean that the flow in the outer core below America is slowing down."

The Swarm satellites not only pick up signals coming from the Earth's magnetic field, but also from its core, mantle, crust and oceans. Scientists at the ESA hope to use the data to make navigation systems that rely on the magnetic field, such as aircraft instruments, more accurate, improve earthquake predictions and pinpoint areas below the planet's surface that are rich in natural resources. Scientists think fluctuations in the magnetic field could help identify where continental plates are shifting and help predict earthquakes.

These first results from Swarm were presented at the Third Swarm Science Meeting in Denmark on June 19.

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It's not something that's ever happened in human history so it's not something we think about too often, but Earth's magnetic poles flip on a regular basis—at least, a regular basis on a geologic scale. And every time the poles flip, the magnetic field that shields our planet from deadly cosmic rays also flips. The next flip, according to new data collected by the European Space Agency, is coming up sooner than scientists expected.

Earth's magnetic field is rooted deep inside the planet. The solid inner core, which is about two-thirds the size of the Moon, is made primarily of iron and is super-heated to almost 10,300 degrees Fahrenheit. Surrounding this solid core is a thick layer made up of iron, nickel, and small amounts of other metals in a liquid state. Differences in temperature, pressure, and the composition of the outer, liquid core causes convection, and as these metals flow, they generate electric currents that in turn produce magnetic fields. Because the Earth is spinning on its axis, these magnetic fields align to form one giant magnetic field that envelops the planet.

But the polarity of this massive magnetic field isn't constant. Over the last 20 million years the Earth has settled into a pattern wherein the poles change polarity every 200,000 to 300,000 years; magnetic north becomes south and vice versa. It's neither a fast nor a clean process. A flip actually takes hundreds of thousands of years, and over the course of that time the magnetic fields tug at one another, with magnetic poles emerging at odd latitudes.

It's by measuring the variations in the magnetic field that scientists find indications that a polar flip is imminent. ESA's Swarm mission is a magnetic field mission that uses an array of three satellites to unravel the mysteries of the Earth's magnetic field.

Recently, big weak spots in the magnetic field more than 370,000 miles above the planet's surface have sprung up over the Western Hemisphere. Meanwhile, the magnetic field has strengthened in other areas, like over the southern Indian Ocean. Scientists behind the Swarm missions aren't entirely sure why the magnetic field is weakening in certain spots, but the likeliest explanation is that the poles are getting ready to flip. So far, it looks like the poles are just starting to migrate a little bit.

Rune Floberghagen, ESA's Swarm mission manager, says the satellites' data points to the magnetic north pole moving towards Siberia. He also notes that the magnetic field is weakening faster now than it has previously. Scientists estimate that it used to weaken at about five percent per century, but recent data says its weakening by five percent per decade. A full flip might happen in about 2,000 years, far sooner than previously predicted.

So the big question is: what will the flipping magnetic field mean for who or whatever is living on Earth when it happens? It turns out not much. Scientists have found no correlation between past polarity flips and mass extinctions. If anything, power grids and communication systems would face the highest risk when the flip happens.

Since it's not going to happen anytime soon or do much of anything, we can continue not thinking or worrying about the flipping magnetic field. For the time being, ESA scientists behind the Swarm mission are most interested in using the data they gather to make systems that rely on our magnetic field more accurate, and possibly apply a better understanding of the changing magnetic field to identifying shifting continental plates and predicting earthquakes.

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Fleataxi was concerned about CMEs and Jerry wrote a story titled *CME*. Both assumed a massive CME from the sun wiping out a significant portion of the Earth's population. This was different, if the Magnetosphere weakened substantially, the CME wouldn't need to be as massive.

We did something we rarely do, had a sit down family meeting to discuss the subject. Point one... no one was sure when the Magnetosphere would weaken to the point of absolute danger. Point two... Solar Flares and CMEs were unpredictable unless your name was "Q". Point three... we should have ample warning because of the travel time from the Sun (Sol) to the Earth (Terra), 2-3 days.

Sharon would contact Lorrie and Amy and give them a heads up. She would send money to Lorrie to pay for gas; if/when it became necessary... because Amy would blow it on more Blu-Ray discs and computer games. We'd see how much more food we could cram into the shelter storage room. I would keep the ammo handy to top off the magazines which were only loaded to 90% of capacity. [That was a big argument... that I lost, and the ammo removed was kept in bullet trays in marked boxes designating manufacturer and bullet weight. Everything could be topped off in a short day.]

The radios would be kept on charging stands, ready to go at a moment's notice and **everyone** would carry a WR602. Side point; although the Oregon Scientific Store didn't carry the WR602, if one searched the web, they were widely available, new and used. http://www.amazon.com/s/?ie=UTF8&keywords=wr602&tag=mh0b-20&index=aps&hvadid=23417635&ref=pd_sl_linykywud_p
http://www.readysmart.com/wr602_noaa_weather_radio_oregon_scientific.html
<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/nwrrcvr.htm>

Plus I would keep my TV on tuned to the Weather Channel, something I never did. But wait, Jerry wrote about a *Pole Shift*... so, what was it going to be and was the mantle floating on the core or was some other theory applicable? A person could go nuts figuring it out; and be wrong. The only constant was that the poles shifted... we already

knew that because the North Pole moved ~35km per year. Unexplained was the thinning of the Magnetosphere.

Perhaps Michio Kaku, a theoretical physicist specializing in string field theory, could explain it better. String field theory was all about mathematics, physics, deductive reasoning and logic. I've been a Kaku fan for years because he has the innate ability to explain complicated mathematical and physics in a manner that most any one can understand. Since he's fluent in Japanese and English, he occasionally teaches in Japan although he's a second generation American; his parents met in one of FDR's Internment Camps. His father, born in the US, was educated in Japan and spoke little English.

We were now baling alfalfa which was grown on 20 of the additional 75 acres. Damon had brought his small Kubota tractor which had a mower and Sharon hired the baling done. We were also buying COB from a grain elevator that blended the corn, oats and barley. Damon and the boys erected a pole barn for the horses and Sharon ordered a small grain bin installed for the COB.

I had given up hunting snakes, the risk was too great and the consequences of another bite too horrible to imagine. But the snakes didn't delineate between the alfalfa field, pasture and the homestead so I was always ready and rarely walked anywhere. At my increasing age, it was a major effort to get up and go to the bathroom so outside trips were limited. And to make life easier, I'd added a twin bed with commercial box springs and mattress to my computer and radio room and only left to use the bathroom.

Sharon slept in an Easy Boy in her quilting room and I slept in my computer room leaving the master bedroom and second bedroom for company. I only used the master bath for my once weekly shower. I used to shower every day when I was active, but I had my own coffee maker in my computer and radio room and usually brought in a gallon of water every morning and only leaving to use the bathroom... 25 steps each way. I was wearing out fast and it was probably due to that diamondback.

I tried to not think about the dream because it was bad news any way one looked at it. And if the Magnetosphere went away, our goose was so cooked... it might only take a solar storm to wipe out life on the planet. But I was assuming and the rule was never assume... because it makes an ass out u and me. The article didn't say the Magnetosphere was gone; just that it was thinning 10 times faster than normal. That implied that the Magnetosphere was thinning anyway.

Still, there is no evidence that a weakened magnetic field would result in a doomsday for Earth. During past polarity flips there were no mass extinctions or evidence of radiation damage. Researchers think power grids and communication systems would be most at risk.

It behooved us to keep our supplies topped off and anything susceptible to EMP in the shelter when it wasn't in use. Was it tin foil hat time?

A tin foil hat is a hat made from one or more sheets of aluminum foil, or a piece of conventional headgear lined with foil, worn in the belief it shields the brain from threats such as electromagnetic fields, mind control, and mind reading.

The notion of wearing homemade headgear for protection has become a popular stereotype and byword for paranoia, persecutory delusions, and belief in conspiracy theories. Tin foil hats have appeared in movies such as Signs and Futurama: Into the Wild Green Yonder. Over time the term has been associated with paranoia and conspiracy theories. It is often associated with beliefs that tin foil hats prevent mind control by governments, spies, or paranormal beings that employ ESP or the microwave auditory effect.

The notion that a tin foil hat can significantly reduce the intensity of incident radio frequency radiation on the wearer's brain has some scientific validity, as the effect of strong radio waves has been documented for quite some time. A well-constructed tin foil enclosure would approximate a Faraday cage, reducing the amount of (typically harmless) radiofrequency electromagnetic radiation passing through to the interior of the structure. A common high school physics demonstration involves placing an AM radio on tin foil, and then covering the radio with a metal bucket. This leads to a noticeable reduction in signal strength. The efficiency of such an enclosure in blocking such radiation depends on the thickness of the tin foil, as dictated by the skin depth, the distance the radiation can propagate in a particular non-ideal conductor. For half-millimeter-thick tin foil, radiation above about 20 kHz (i.e., including both AM and FM bands) would be partially blocked, although tin foil is not sold in this thickness, so numerous layers of tin foil would be required to achieve this effect.

The effectiveness of the tin foil hat as electromagnetic shielding for stopping radio waves is greatly reduced by it not being a complete enclosure. Placing an AM radio under a metal bucket without a conductive layer underneath demonstrates the relative ineffectiveness of such a setup. Indeed, because the effect of an ungrounded Faraday cage is to partially reflect the incident radiation, a radio wave that is incident on the inner surface of the hat (i.e., coming from underneath the hat-wearer) would be reflected and partially 'focused' towards the user's brain. However the hat may be partially grounded by the conductive properties of the skin with which it contacts.

A study by graduate students at MIT determined that a tin foil hat could attenuate incoming radiation depending on frequency. At WIFI frequencies - 2.4 GHz is attenuated by up to 90 dB; the effect was observed to be roughly independent of the relative placement of the wearer and radiation source. At some microwave wavelengths, the skin depth is less than the thickness of even the thinnest foil.

Tin foil hats are seen by some as a protective measure against the effects of electromagnetic radiation (EMR). Despite some allegations that EMR exposure has negative health consequences, at this time no link has been established between the radio-frequency EMR tin foil hats are meant to protect against and subsequent ill health.

In 1962, Allan H. Frey discovered that reception of the induced sounds by radio-frequency electromagnetic signals heard as clicks and buzzes can be blocked by a patch of wire mesh (rather than foil) placed above the temporal lobe.

Was I still dreaming? How could I tell? *Dreams mainly occur in the rapid-eye movement (REM) stage of sleep – when brain activity is high and resembles that of being awake. REM sleep is revealed by continuous movements of the eyes during sleep. At times, dreams may occur during other stages of sleep. However, these dreams tend to be much less vivid or memorable.*

The length of a dream can vary; they may last for a few seconds, or approximately 20-30 minutes. People are more likely to remember the dream if they are awakened during the REM phase. The average person has three to five dreams per night, but some may have up to seven dreams in one night. The dreams tend to last longer as the night progresses. During a full eight-hour night sleep, most dreams occur in the typical two hours of REM.

Think about it, I was impressionable. Witness my fear of snakes that came from reading an article about Bill Haast being bitten by a blue krait. It was reinforced when Bob Elgin was bitten by a cobra at the Des Moines Children's Zoo and Haast was flown in to give Elgin a transfusion to save his life. We have Elgin's book *Man in a Cage*. One final word on Bill Haast... he lived to the age 100 and died in 2012.

Every time I got a twitch in my right thigh just above the knee, I knew I wasn't dreaming because I'd never experience physical pain in a dream. I had let my ham license expire but that didn't mean a lot because all one had to do was pass the tests and send the results to the FCC. I had passed the test through Extra Class in 1992 but couldn't pass the code requirement. I misplaced the documents proving I had passed the exams and wasn't able to prove I had when they changed the requirements.

Instead of using my call sign, KD6GDQ, I used the call sign of a friend who had died, a few years back. No, I won't tell you what it was, that's stupid. It was a W0 call sign and that's all you need to know.

Everything under the Fleetwood home that needed to be accessed had one of those tunnels running near it and over a period of time, we'd cut out the concrete and dug to the point we needed to access. All the pipes and such were wrapped in that self-regulating heat tape and that pipe insulation with the seam sealed with duct tape. Not that it normally got that cold where we lived.

The elevation was higher here than Palmdale. Where Palmdale was 2,657' (810 m), our altitude was ~ 4,581' (1,396 m), hence colder. Dewey was the home of Young's Farm, a family-owned farm selling turkeys and pumpkins since 1946. We had mostly small turkeys in the freezer plus 2 large ones for Thanksgiving and Christmas. There was also all those Cure 81 hams for Easter and corned beef for St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. Sharon was big on serving Corned beef, boiled cabbage and boiled potatoes on that

holiday and we weren't Irish. Adding the boiled potatoes made the meal a New England boiled dinner, but I wasn't about to burst her bubble because it was a good meal.

The thing I like about it the most was the boiled cabbage wasn't cooked to death. God bless my mother but she cooked everything to death and her boiled cabbage stank. The same applied to fried liver and I won't eat that to this day. I will eat Braunschweiger if I prepare it. I add onion and mayo and use it as a Hors d'oeuvre served on crackers. Braunschweiger is the name liverwurst goes by in the Midwest. Both reflect my Mid-western upbringing.

Dream a Little Dream of Me – Epilog

Well, look it here, 160 pages no real disaster except the dream I can't shake, getting bitten by a western diamondback and the possibility that the Magnetosphere is thinning more rapidly than it should. I wonder if those scientists know Al Gore. He says we're having global warming and to prove it, he's warming the globe. I forget; how much electricity does he use in his mansions?

He has been criticized for his above-average energy consumption in using private jets, and in owning multiple, very large homes, one of which was reported in 2007 as using high amounts of electricity. Gore's spokesperson responded by stating that the Gores use renewable energy which is more expensive than regular energy and that the Tennessee house in question has been retrofitted to make it more energy-efficient.

In other words, the spokesman agrees that the house wasn't energy-efficient until someone brought it to Gore's attention and he fixed it because it made him look bad. Private jets, guess I missed that.

Sharon and I are getting older and don't do much cooking. At least, not anything that requires a lot of work. Derek is a great cook and we wait until he's up visiting and let him fix the fancy dishes. Warming a ham in the oven is no big deal and making escalloped or au-gratin potatoes from a package isn't very hard. Add a can of green beans, corn or Mexicorn and you have a meal. Since we have a slicer, slicing the ham and slicing deli slices isn't too hard. A lifetime ago, I cut meat and some of the lessons stayed with me. I know what I do and don't like. Sharon and I like same things, just cooked differently, e.g., she likes rare and I like medium.

I haven't been able to convince her that ground chuck is better for hamburgers than the 7% she prefers. Can't think of anymore about our situation to talk about. I hope to figure out that dream, one of these days.

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